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FAIRY
TALES**


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KING THURSH-BEARD

The King commanded him to sing again

[see page 79]

FOULSHAM'S BOY AND GIRL FICTION LIBRARY

GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES

ILLUSTRATED IN LINE BY
L. THOMAS ATHERLEY

AND WITH FIVE COLOUR PLATES BY
GIL DYER

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GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES

HANSEL AND GRETEL

ONCE upon a time, near a big forest, there lived a poor woodcutter, with his wife and two children by his first marriage, a girl called Gretel, and a little boy named Hansel. He could give



There came forth a little old woman.

[See page 18

them but little to eat, indeed at one time, when a great famine was in the land, he could hardly earn enough for his daily bread: and, one

evening, as he lay in bed thinking of his troubles, he said to his wife, "I do not know what will become of us! We cannot feed our children when we have scarcely enough to feed ourselves!"

His wife replied, "Husband, let us take them, early in the morning, into the forest, give them some bread and make a fire; we can then leave them and go to work. They will not find their way home, and we shall be rid of them."

"I cannot do that, wife," said her husband, "how can you have the heart to leave them in that wood, in danger of wild beasts who would soon come and attack them!"

"Then, you foolish man," she said, "we must all starve, and you had better make coffins for us."

She gave him no rest till he at last yielded, crying, "How shall I part with my children?"

The children, however, had been too hungry to sleep, so they overheard what their step-mother had planned.

Gretel sobbed bitterly, saying to Hansel, "What shall we do?"

"Do not cry," said Hansel, "I will take care of you."

When their parents were asleep, he rose, dressed again, and stepped quietly out of the back door.

The moon was shining brightly, and some white stones on the path looked almost like pieces of silver, as they glittered in the moonlight. Hansel bent down and gathered up as

many as his pocket would hold. When he returned to Gretel he said, "Do not fear, little sister, go to sleep. God will take care of us." Then he crept into his bed.

In the morning, at daybreak, the wife aroused the children; "Come, you lazy bones, we are going to gather sticks in the forest." She gave each of them a slice of bread, and said, "Here is something for your dinner, but do not eat it too early for there is no more."

Gretel put the bread in her pocket for she knew that Hansel had filled his with stones, and then they went forth.

Hansel stood still after they had gone a little way, and looked back at the house behind them.

After doing this several times, his father noticed it and said, "Hansel, what are you looking at? Why do you linger behind? Did you forget your legs?"

"I was saying goodbye to my white cat there upon the roof."

"Stupid one," said the wife, "that is not the cat: it is the sun shining on the white chimney-stack." But Hansel was not really looking at the cat, for every time he had turned, he had let fall a pebble on the path. .

After they had gone into the depths of the forest, the father bade the children gather some sticks and he would make a fire for them so that they would be warm; and, when the children returned with the sticks, he set them alight.

Then, as the flames burned high, the wife said, "Now children, stay near the fire while

we chop wood in the forest, and when we are ready we will come and fetch you."

Hansel and Gretel rested by the fire till mid-day, then ate their bread, thinking that their father was near because every now and then they could hear the sound of an axe, but it was only a branch which he had tied to a tree, to blow to and fro in the wind. They waited a long time till they could no longer keep their eyes open and at last they slept.

It was quite dark when they awoke, and Gretel began to cry, "How can we find our way home?" Hansel comforted her, saying, "When the moon shines we shall see our way."

Presently the moon arose, and Hansel, taking Gretel's hand looked about till he found the white stones shining like silver coins and showing them the way.

They walked on all night, and came to their father's cottage as the day dawned. Tapping at the door they were met by their stepmother, who said, "You naughty children! Why did you stay so long in the forest? We thought you were lost!" But their father rejoiced, for it had grieved him sorely to leave them to die. Some time afterwards, there was again a great famine throughout the country, and the children one night heard their stepmother saying to their father, "There is but half a loaf remaining; the children must be got rid of! Let us take them far into the forest so that they cannot find their way back. It is our only chance to live, ourselves."

The father's heart sank, and he said, "No! Let us rather share the last slice with the children," but his wife refused to listen, and scolded him till at last he yielded again.

The children, however, had overheard their parents talking together, and when the old people had fallen asleep, Hansel rose, meaning to look for some more white stones on the path, but the door was locked and he could not open it.

He comforted Gretel, saying as before, "Go to sleep; God will take care of us."

Next morning the stepmother aroused them, giving them each a piece of bread, still smaller than the last had been.

As they went along, he crumbled his piece in his pocket, and, bending from time to time, kept on dropping crumbs upon the path.

"Why do you stand still so often, Hansel?" asked his father.

"I am looking at my little white pigeon!" answered the boy. "It is cooing farewell to me from the roof."

"Little goose!" said his stepmother, "that is not your pigeon, but the sunlight upon the chimney-stack."

Hansel said nothing, but continued to strew the bread-crumbs as he walked.

The stepmother took the children far into the forest, and, when they had made a big fire, she said, "Stay here and sleep for a little while. We are going to fell trees nearby, and later we will come back and fetch you."

At midday Gretel gave half her piece of bread

to Hansel, as he had used his on the path, and having eaten it, they fell asleep, but night closed down upon them, and no one came to fetch the children, who awoke when it was quite dark.

Hansel tried again to comfort his sister by saying, "Wait, Gretel, until the moon rises, then we shall be able to see the bread-crumbs which I let fall upon the path."

Presently the moon arose and the children began to look for the crumbs, but there were none to be seen, for the birds of the woods and fields had eaten them all. They walked on and on the whole night long and the next day, but still they did not reach the end of the forest; and they grew hungry and thirsty, for they could find nothing to eat but a few berries on the bushes. At last they became so tired that they could go no further, and lying down beneath a tree they slept.

By the third day they had wandered far into the forest, and Hansel knew that they would die of hunger if they did not find their way home soon. At last about midday they perceived a wonderful bird perched on a tree, singing so happily that they stayed awhile to listen. Suddenly it stopped singing, and spreading its wings flew away. The children followed after it as well as they could until they saw it perch upon the roof of a little house, which, they perceived on approaching it, to be made of bread and cakes with windows of barley-sugar.

"Let us enter," said Hansel, "and make a good meal. I will have some of the roof; and

here is a piece of the window for you. It is sure to be sweet."

So Hansel stood on tiptoe and broke off a piece from the roof, whilst Gretel took a big bite from the window.

While they were eating, a voice called out from within, "Rap-tap, rap-tap, who knocks at my house?" The children replied, "The wind, the wind of Heaven," and went on eating.

Hansel took a piece of the roof, which he thought very good, and gave Gretel another window-pane. They were just sitting down to enjoy it, when, all at once, the door opened and there came forth a little old woman, walking with a crutch.

She so frightened the children that they dropped what they had been eating; however the little woman nodded kindly, saying "You dear children! How came you here? Enter and stay with me; you need fear no evil!" and she gave a hand to each and took them into the little house, where a good meal of milk and pancakes, sugar, apples and nuts awaited them, while in the other room were two little, white-covered beds, wherein the children lay as though they were come to Heaven itself.

Now the little old dame seemed kind to them, but they little knew that she was really a cruel witch who enticed children into her clutches by making the house of bread and sweets, but, after she had them in her power would kill and eat them, making a great feast of it.

All witches have red eyes but cannot see

much by day, though they have a very strong sense of smell, like animals, so that they know when children are coming near them.

When Hansel and Gretel had been getting near to the witch's house that morning, she had chuckled evilly, and said, "Here are two who will not get away from me."

In the morning, while they lay sleeping peacefully, she looked at their rosy little faces, and muttered to herself, "That will be a good meal." She shook Hansel roughly and shut him into a latticed cage, despite his screams and struggles.

Next she wakened Gretel, crying, "Get up, you lazy child, and draw some water! You must cook a good breakfast for your brother. He will soon be fat enough for me to eat." Poor Gretel wept, but vainly, for she had to do as the witch had ordered, so a good breakfast was prepared for Hansel, while Gretel was only given a crab's claw. The old witch came to see Hansel in his cage each day, saying, "Put out your finger that I may see how fat you are getting," but Hansel would put out a bone, so that the witch, unable to see, should think it his finger.

She wondered why he grew no fatter day by day, and after a month had passed she lost patience and vowed that she would wait no longer.

"Gretel," she cried, in a rage, "make haste and fetch some water; be he fat or thin, I will kill and cook Hansel to-day."

So poor Gretel, sobbing bitterly, was obliged to carry the water, though her tears fell fast. "Save us now, dear God," she prayed. "It

were better to have been eaten by the beasts of the forest ; at least we should have been killed together."

But the old witch scolded her for her tears and Gretel had perforce to fill the pot and light the fire.

"Let us bake first," cried the witch, "the oven is hot, and I have made the bread." Then she pulled Gretel up to the oven, beneath which the fire glowed brightly. "Get in," she cried, "and tell me if it is hot enough to bake the bread," but she meant, when Gretel was in, to shut her into the oven, and bake her to eat as well as Hansel. So Gretel, who knew what was in her mind, told her that she did not know how to get into the oven.

"You simpleton," cried the witch, "the oven is big enough. Look ! I could get into it myself !" with which she went up to the oven and put her head into it. Now Gretel pushed with all her might and tumbled the old woman right into the oven, shutting the door and making it fast !

The witch shrieked dreadfully, but Gretel ran off, and let her burn to death. She opened the door of Hansel's cage, crying, "Hansel, Hansel, we're safe. The witch is burnt to ashes."

He sprang forth from the cage like a bird set free, and they fell into each other's arms, and kissed one another again and again. At last they knew there was no more to fear, so they ran back into the witch's house where they found a treasure-chest filled with gold and jewels.

"These are better than stones," said Hansel, filling his pockets as full as they would hold; and Gretel cried, "I will take some also," and tied up a great many in her apron.

"Now let us go," said Hansel, "and find our way out of the magic woods," but when they had wandered on for two hours, they found a great sheet of water before them.

"We cannot cross this," said Hansel, "there is no bridge."

"Nor is there any boat either," said Gretel, "but there swims a white swan. I will ask her to take us across." So she called :

"White swan, good white swan,
Hansel and Gretel here we stand,
There is neither bridge nor ferry,
Take us on your back to land."

The bird swam up to them, so Hansel seated himself upon its back, and told Gretel to get on behind him, but his sister said, "No, the swan cannot carry us both at once. Let us go one by one." This the swan did, and when both were safely across, they found themselves in a part of the forest which they knew better and better each moment, until soon they beheld their father's cottage.

Then how fast they ran, until rushing in at the door, they fell into their father's arms. Not one peaceful day had he spent from the moment that he had parted with them, and meanwhile their stepmother had died.

So Gretel opened her apron and out fell the

gold and jewels upon the ground, while Hansel pulled forth a pocketful in each hand. Thus their troubles were over, and they dwelt most happily afterwards.

THE PRINCE WHO WAS AFRAID OF NOTHING

ONCE upon a time there lived a Prince who grew too discontented to stay longer at home, and, as he had never known the meaning of fear, he made up his mind to go out into the great world, where he would find freedom, and might encounter most wonderful adventures.

Accordingly, he bade farewell to his parents, and set forth, taking the straight road before him, and travelling night and day, caring but little where his footsteps led him.

At last he came to a big castle, the home of a Giant, and, feeling a little tired, the Prince sat down in front of the entrance for a rest. After a while he amused himself by looking around, and just beyond, in a big courtyard, he saw a set of bowls and ninepins, each ninepin as big as a full-grown man. These were the Giant's toys. The Prince felt that he, too, would like a game, so, setting the ninepins, he took the balls and bowled at them, shouting for joy as they went down with a clatter on the ground.

Hearing the noise, the Giant put his head out of the window, and when he saw a man, no bigger than the ninepins, playing with them so easily, he was amazed.

"Now, you worm," he cried. "What are you doing with my balls. Who made you so strong?"

The Prince looked round to see from whence came the voice; then he looked up and saw the Giant. "Stupid man," he replied, "yours is not the only strong arm in the world. I can do just what I want to do."

This angered the Giant, and down he came, looking on with surprise, as the Prince continued to bowl and knock down the ninepins, each one as big as himself.

"Son of man," he cried, "if you are indeed of that puny race, you shall fetch me an Apple from the Tree of Life."

"Why should I?" asked the Prince. "What do you want to do with it?"

"I do not want the apple myself," answered the Giant. "My wife desires it, and I have gone all over the world to try and find it for her, but so far in vain."

"Well, I will soon find the tree," said the Prince, a little boastfully, "and nothing shall stop me from fetching you that apple."

"It is not such an easy task as you think," said the Giant; "for the tree stands in a garden, round which runs an iron fencing, and in front of this, wild and savage animals keep guard lest anyone climb over it."

"Oh they will not keep me out," said the Prince.

"Well, if you enter the Garden, you will see the golden apples on the branches," said the Giant. "But even then you will not be able to pick them, for there is a ring on the tree, through which you have to pass your hand before you can reach the apples, and no one has ever been able to do this."

"So much the better; I will be the first," cried the Prince; then, bidding the giant "farewell," he set forth again upon his way, through forests and fields, over hills and valleys till he found the wondrous garden. Just as the Giant had said, savage animals lay asleep outside the railings, but they had grown so old and sleepy that they did not stir as the Prince crept past them, and quickly climbed over the railing into the magic garden. Here in its midst, grew the Tree of Life, its golden apples shining from amongst the branches.

Overjoyed at his success, the Prince quickly climbed the tree, and there he saw the ring. He thrust his hand through it quite easily, and plucked one of the finest apples from the bough. Then he tried to withdraw his hand from the ring again but found that it had slipped up on to his arm, and was now closed tightly round it. To his surprise, the Prince now felt stronger than ever; his blood bounded through his veins, and when he had once more reached the ground, the apple in his hand, he looked around him. He did not intend to climb back over the railing.

but stepped up to the big iron gate and shook it till it opened with a mighty clang which wakened the lion, sleeping outside. The Prince strode forth and the great animal rose up and followed him, not in pursuit, but humbly as though it were a big dog.

Then the Prince made his way back to the Giant.

"Here is the apple from the Tree of Life," he said. "I have brought it back as I promised."

The Giant snatched it gladly, and went to his wife with the apple for which she had yearned so deeply.

The wife was much younger than the Giant, beautiful and of nimble mind; and when she saw that the ring was not on the Giant's arm, she said quickly, "How come you by the apple? You did not fetch it, for the ring is not round your arm!"

"I forgot it," cried the Giant. "I will go back and bring it."

He believed that it would be quite simple to make the Prince yield up the ring, as he had so easily given him the apple. So back he went, and asked for the ring.

But this the Prince would not give up to him.

"Whoever has the apple, must have the ring as well," said the Giant, "and if you do not let me have it, I will fight you."

The Prince was quite willing to fight, and for some time they wrestled and struggled, but the Prince was strengthened by the ring, and the

Giant found that he could not overcome him. He made up his mind, therefore, to win the ring by trickery.

"We are both too tired to fight more," he said. "Let us cool ourselves in the stream first."

The Prince did not think of this being a trick, and on the brink of the river, he removed his clothes, pulling off the ring at the same time.

Directly he had done this, the Giant, full of glee, snatched the ring and ran away with it as fast as he could.

But the lion was watching them and, seeing what had happened, went in pursuit of the Giant. Seizing his hand, he got the ring into his mouth and came back to his master.

The Giant, determined not to give in, returned once more, hiding behind a big tree, and while the Prince was dressing again, sprang forth, and put out the young man's eyes. Then he took the poor blinded Prince, and led him to the edge of a high precipice, where he left him.

"A couple of steps more, and he will fall over; then I can take the ring off easily."

But he had forgotten the faithful lion, who had remained by his master, gripping his clothes in his mouth, and who now pulled him back into safety. When the Giant climbed down, expecting to draw the ring from the lifeless arm, instead of a dead man, he found the Prince safe and sound.

"Can I not destroy this weakling?" he exclaimed in anger. Then he led the Prince to still another abyss, but here again, the lion followed, and once more pulled the Prince back

from danger. The Giant who had followed, stood close by, and the lion gave him a push, so that it was he who fell over the deep cliffs and was killed below.

The faithful animal then led his master onwards till they came to a clear stream. Here the Prince sat down to rest, and the lion dipping his tail into the running water, splashed the water into the Prince's eyes.

Directly the drops touched his eyelids, his sight came back again, and the first object on which his gaze rested was a little bird, flying aimlessly to and fro, as if it, too, were blind. Soon it flew down into the water, and bathing itself in the stream, its sight also was restored. Then the Prince knew that God had led him once more to safety, so returning thanks to Heaven for the blessing of sight, and followed by the faithful lion, he went again on his travels.

A little later, it happened that he came to a castle which was in the hands of a magician. Within its doors stood a young girl of beautiful figure and features, but quite black in colour. When she saw the Prince, she cried, "Oh save me from the wicked magician who has enchanted me."

"What have I to do, in order to free you?" asked the Prince.

"You must stay for three nights in the Court of this Castle," she replied. "But all through that time, you must show no fear. If you do not show the slightest sign of being frightened, and make no sound, then I shall be set free, and you will be quite safe."

"I fear no one," said the Prince, proudly. "With the help of God, I will venture with all my heart."

Thus saying, he penetrated further into the castle, and when it was quite dark, sat down in the hall to await his adventure.

Everything was quiet until the bells struck twelve, then with a great noise, shrieking, and groaning, from every corner poured forth evil spirits. At first they took no notice of the Prince, but sat down in the centre of the hall, and after lighting a fire, began to play cards.

Soon one of them, who had lost, said, "There is a stranger in the hall. I have lost my game through that. Come out," he added, looking over to the corner where the Prince had seated himself.

Despite the screams and noise, the Prince had kept quiet, but now all the evil spirits arose swarming round and over him, till he was unable to defend himself against their assaults. He did not utter a cry, despite their utmost efforts to torment him, and at last, at cock-crow, they disappeared. •

For a while the Prince lay, too worn out to move, but as the sun rose, the black maiden entered. In her hand was a flagon, containing the Water of Life. After she had bathed his face, the Prince arose refreshed and as strong as ever.

"This is only the first night," she said. "You have survived it, but alas, there are still two more to pass through."

.

She departed, and the Prince noticed that now her feet had turned white once more.

On the following night, at the hour of twelve, the spirits returned, and recommenced their attacks upon the Prince, till his body was wounded all over; nevertheless, he remained silent, and when the dawn came, they were obliged to leave him alone.

Once more the maiden came with her flagon, and again he felt his strength renewed. When she left him, he saw that her arms had become white, even to her finger-tips.

He knew that he had only one more night to endure, but he felt sure that it would be the hardest of all.

When the troop of evil spirits perceived that he was still alive, they screeched angrily and jeered at him; then they fell upon him over and over again until it did not seem as if he would escape with his life. At last they were forced to leave him, and he lay, spent and sore, powerless to lift even a finger.

He was almost blind with pain, until the black maiden had once more bathed his face with the healing water.

When she had done this, his strength returned, the pain went from his wounds and he opened his eyes.

At his side stood the girl, as fair as the dawn itself, her hair golden as sunlight, her eyes blue as the sky.

She smiled sweetly at his astonished gaze. "Come, my Prince," she said softly, "wave

your sword above the entrance, three times, that all within may be set free."

The Prince obeyed her, and as he sheathed his sword, the castle and all within its walls were freed from the spell which had bound them.

The maiden whom he had restored, appeared in the robes of a Princess, and from the adjoining rooms came all her retainers who also had been overpowered by the magician.

A banquet was prepared to which the Prince led the Princess, after which their wedding was celebrated with great splendour.

THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN LITTLE GOATS

ONCE upon a time there lived a Mother Goat who had seven little children which she loved as dearly as all mothers love their little ones.

Wishing to go into the woods one day to find something for them to eat, she called to her seven children, saying :

"Do not let anyone enter whilst I am away, lest the Wolf come here and eat you all up, hide, hoofs and bones. You will know him by his black paws and harsh voice."

The young goats answered, "Do not fear, dear Mother, we will take heed of what you say."

Then the Goat bleated "good-bye," and trotted off quickly on her way.

Presently there came a knock at the door, and a voice cried, "Let me in, children, your mother has returned with gifts for each of you."

Now when the young goats heard the harsh voice, they knew it was a wolf, so they answered: "We cannot let you in. Our mother's voice is not harsh like yours; we know that you are a Wolf."

Then away went the Wolf till he came to a shop where he bought some honey, which he ate



"I have injured my paw. Put a piece of dough upon it."

in order to smooth the harshness of his voice; after this he ran back to the Goat's hut, and cried again, as he rapped at the door, "My children, let me in. Your mother is here with gifts for you all."

But the little goats had seen the Wolf's black

feet which he had rested on the window-ledge, so they answered, "We must not let you in. Our Mother's paws are not black like yours. We know you are a Wolf."

Then the Wolf ran away till he found a baker's shop where he cried, "I have injured my paw. Put a piece of dough upon it." The baker did as he asked and away went the Wolf to a miller and said, "Shake some flour over my paws." Now the miller guessed that he meant to play a trick on someone so at first he refused, but the Wolf said, "If you will not shake some flour over my paws I will eat you up," and the miller was so frightened that he did as the Wolf wished.

So the Wolf ran back to the little goats' door and tapped for the third time, crying, "Let me in, dear children. Your Mother has returned with presents for you all." But the little goats cried, "Let us see your paws so that we may know that you are our Mother." Then the Wolf placed his paws on the window-ledge and the little goats saw that they looked white, and they opened the door, and who did they see but the Wolf! Then they were almost frightened out of their lives and did not know where to hide from him. One crawled beneath the table, another crept under the bed; a third climbed on to a shelf, the fourth ran into the pantry, the fifth hid behind the stove, the sixth squeezed into the copper and the last one got into the big Grandfather's Clock which stood in the corner.

The Wolf quickly discovered one after another and ate them up, all except the last little goat

who had got into the Grandfather's Clock. The Wolf did not think of looking into that and having swallowed them all, as he thought, he crawled heavily out into the field close by and fell sound asleep beneath the hedge.

In a little while the Mother goat returned from the woods, and what did she see? Through the open door of the hut a terrible sight met her gaze! Everything in the room was upset; the bed was pulled about, and the china lay in pieces on the floor, but no children were to be seen. She called their names one by one but there was no reply until, when she cried out the name of the youngest little goat, a muffled voice came from inside the Grandfather's Clock, "Oh, dear Mother, open the door, I am in the clock." So the goat unfastened the door of the clock and out crept the youngest goat and related tearfully all that had happened.

Ah! How piteously the old goat wept for her poor children. But after a time she called to the youngest goat and went forth into the field close by until she came to the hedge beneath which lay the old wolf, asleep, and breathing so heavily that the hedge trembled with the sound.

She gazed at him in horror and suddenly she saw that his body quivered as if there were something alive inside him. "Ah Heaven!" thought the poor Mother. "Could it be any of my poor little ones whom he has eaten alive?" and at the thought she ran back to the hut and snatched up a needle, her shears, and a reel of thread. Carefully she slit open the 'Wolf's

stomach and at the first cut out peeped a little goat, and at the next cut he leapt forth followed by his five brothers and sisters all quite safe and sound, for the greedy wolf had swallowed them whole !

Then how happy they were ! They leapt and gambolled round their Mother like young lambs in Spring till the old goat said, " Now run quickly and bring me a big stone, each of you, and we will place them in the Wolf's stomach without awaking him." Off trotted the little goats and brought back seven great stones. These the old goat, seeing that he still slept soundly, placed in the Wolf's stomach, which she sewed up again neatly.

Soon after this the Wolf awoke, and stretched himself, but the heavy stones inside him made him feel so strange and shaken that he dragged himself down to the stream to quench his thirst, which he thought had been caused by all the little goats he had eaten, and, as he ran, the heavy stones rattled inside him till he cried :

" What rattles, what rattles within my poor bones ?
The young goats inside me feel just like great stones."

At last he came to the stream, where he bent over and drank, but the stones within him rolled about so heavily that he overbalanced, and, falling into the stream, was drowned.

When all the little goats saw what had happened they ran to the bank of the stream, where they jumped for joy around the old goat,

crying, "The Wolf is drowned, the Wolf is drowned," and then they all went home together to put the hut in order once more.

THE SHOES WHICH WERE DANCED TO PIECES

ONCE upon a time, there lived the king of a far country, who had twelve beautiful daughters. The fame of their beauty spread over the land, so that the king ordered that they should all sleep in one long room, the door of which he himself saw bolted every night. By this means, he thought, he would keep them away from the gay world.

But one morning when he stood watching the door unlocked at the usual time, he noticed that their shoes standing outside the door, were all in holes. Now these were evidently dancing slippers, and none of the daughters would say where they had been dancing. None of the servants could, or perhaps would tell the King, and this angered him still more. He made a proclamation, therefore, throughout his kingdom, that whoever could find out where the King's daughters had danced in the night, should choose one of them for his bride, and become King afterwards, as he had no son to succeed him. The King made one other rule, however, and this was that each suitor should have three nights

in which to succeed, but if he failed, then he would lose his life.

Before long a Prince arrived and took upon himself the task.

The King received him with much pleasure. He was given a room close to that of the Princesses, from which he might keep watch.

Even the door of the Princesses' room was left open, so that they should not try to leave by any other door.

The Prince kept watch for some time, but presently sleep overcame him, and when he awoke the next morning, it was clear that the Princesses had escaped, for again their slippers were worn into holes.

The Prince tried again, but on the second and third nights the same thing happened, and on the following day the poor Prince was executed.

Notwithstanding his fate, many more suitors followed, and made their attempts in vain. At last a poor Soldier, who had served in the wars, came to the city, and in one of the streets, he met an old peasant woman who asked him where he was going.

He answered her kindly enough. "I have nowhere else to go, and I am curious to try my luck at the castle, to find out how the Princesses dance their slippers into holes."

The old woman said then, "Take care not to drink any wine, and pretend to sleep."

Then she helped him further by lending him her cloak, which would render him invisible, if he threw it over his shoulders.

Thanking her heartily, the Soldier made his way to the castle, and asked to be taken to the King.

He then offered himself as a suitor for one of the princesses, and when evening came, he was taken to the room, as the others had been.

Just as he was about to take up his post at the door, the eldest princess brought him a flagon of wine, and bade him drink her health. The Soldier accepted it with pleasure, but he had tied a leathern pocket round his neck, and while the princess was not looking, he poured the wine into this, instead of drinking it. Then he thanked her, and soon after, laid himself on the bed, which was in sight of the princesses' room, and presently began to snore loudly.

Then he heard the princesses laugh amongst themselves, and one said, "Here is another simpleton who will lose his life ! "

Then they began to prepare for a dance ; cupboards were opened, beautiful dresses donned, and new silver slippers, and each princess as she gave herself a last look in the long glass, laughed with glee. But the youngest princess sighed, and when asked the reason, she said, " I feel as if something will happen to us this time, and we shall be discovered."

" Nonsense, you foolish child," cried the eldest princess. " What can possibly happen to us. Has not the wine always done its work well. Besides this Soldier was so tired that I think he would have slept, even if I had not given him the sleeping potion."



THE SHOES WHICH WERE DANCED TO PIECES
Someone holds my cloak—she cried

When they were all ready, however, she went to be quite sure, and looked in at the Soldier, who lay with his eyes closed tightly, and still snoring.

So the princess returned and the eldest sister tapped sharply on her bedstead, and it sank down silently into the ground, leaving an opening at the side of which was a stairway. From his own room, the Soldier watched the twelve princesses as they went down this secret way, then when the last had almost vanished, he rose, threw the old woman's cloak over his shoulders, and as he looked into the long glass, he saw that he was invisible.

Boldly enough now he followed the maidens, close upon the heels of the youngest sister. So closely, indeed, did he tread, that his foot stood on her cloak, in the middle of the flight of stairs.

The Princess felt the tug and grew frightened again.

"Someone holds my cloak," she cried.

"Nonsense, child," replied her sister. "You have let it catch on a nail."

So down they went, till they reached the end of the stairs, and came out into a beautiful glade, where the trees had branches of solid silver, and the leaves glittered in the moonlight. The Soldier reached up for a small branch, as a proof that he had seen these trees, and as he broke it off it made a loud snapping sound.

"Hark! what was that?" cried the youngest princess again.

"That is a welcoming shot because we have arrived," cried the eldest.

Again the little party went on, followed by the watchful but invisible Soldier. They came to another glade where the foliage of the trees was all made of gold, and then still further on, where the leaves were studded with diamonds. Again the Soldier broke off small branches, and each time the sounds made the youngest princess cry out in fright that something was wrong.

When they came forth from out of the third glade, there was a lake, where twelve boats awaited them. In each was a Prince, and as each sister took their usual boat, the Soldier waited till all were filled, then he sat down at the back of the youngest princess.

"This boat seems very heavy," said the Prince, as he took up the oars. "Much heavier than usual, I shall need all my strength to get it across."

"It is very hot weather," said the princess.

A big castle stood on the other side of the lake, and the Soldier could soon hear the sounds of music from within. When they reached it, each Prince took his own princess and danced with her, whilst the Soldier danced amongst them, invisible.

Sometimes they would stop to take wine, and then the Soldier would stretch out his hand, and take it, before it reached their hands, or drink from the glass before it reached their lips. Till three o'clock in the morning they danced, and then once more the princesses' shoes were in holes, and they prepared to return to their own

castle. They were rowed across the lake by the Princes, and this time the Soldier went into the first boat with the eldest Princess. He had also brought away with him one of the drinking cups, and directly they landed, while the Princesses were bidding their swains farewell, with many promises to return the next night, the Soldier went on in front, and got to his own room and into his bed, by the time the tired Princesses had got up the stairs. They took off their fine dresses, and then listened at the Soldier's door. They could hear him snoring loudly, so, completely content, they crept into their own beds and slept till daybreak.

In the morning, the Soldier was asked no questions, and he said nothing of his adventures, as he wished once more to see the magic castle, as well as the beautiful glades.

The next nights, the Princesses made their escape in the same way. First they gave the soldier the wine, and though he pretended to be much upset because he had slept so soundly, he drank it just the same, so far as the Princesses could see, and then went off to sleep as on the preceding night. Each night he donned his magic cloak and followed the maidens, unseen and unheard by them, for this time he was more careful. Each time he brought away with him a glass from the castle as proof of his story.

On the morning after the third night, he was summoned before the King, and placing the branches and the drinking vessels in his knapsack, he came before the King's throne.

“ Well, and where have the Princesses gone to dance each night,” asked His Majesty, sternly.

“ In an underground castle at the side of a lake,” replied the Soldier. Then he told his story, and brought forth the jewelled branches and the drinking cups, and when the King sent for his daughters, and they saw these proofs, they knew they could no longer keep their secret.

The King kept his word, and asked the Soldier which of the Princesses he desired to wed. Then the Soldier turned to the eldest Princess who had given him the wine, because she had smiled sweetly at him, even though she knew her drink would cause him to sleep.

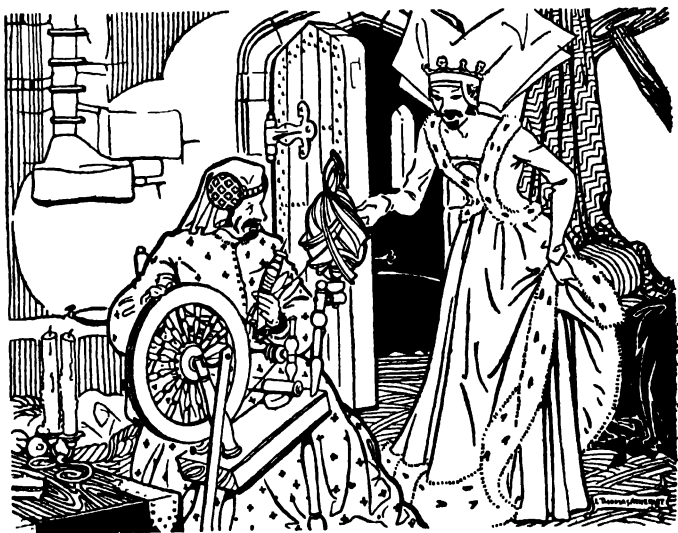
A little later the wedding took place amidst much rejoicing, and amongst the guests was the little old woman, whose advice and magic cloak had so helped the Soldier to win a wife, a kingdom, and preserve his own life as well.

BRIAR ROSE

ONCE upon a time there lived a King and Queen who had no children although they had always longed for one.

As the Queen was bathing one day and wishing, as usual, that she had a daughter, out jumped a frog from the water and said, “ Before the year is out you shall have your wish.”

And it happened as the frog had predicted. A child was born to the Queen, who was so wondrous fair that the King and Queen were overjoyed. They arranged a magnificent banquet and invited everyone of importance in the kingdom including all the Wise Women, who love children. Now there were thirteen Wise Women in his kingdom, but the King had only invited twelve as he had not enough golden plates for any more guests to be invited.



“ What are you doing ? ”

The feast was held with all the splendour imaginable, and when it was finished the Wise Women endowed the royal child with marvellous gifts ; the first gave her beauty, a second wealth, a third kindness, a fourth cleverness and so on

through all the virtues and riches that could be thought of, until the twelfth was just about to present her gift. Then suddenly the thirteenth Wise Woman arrived in a great rage because she had not been invited to the feast, and neither speaking nor looking at anybody she cried, "Upon her fifteenth birthday, she will (prick) her finger with a spindle and die." So saying she departed in silent fury.

The guests were horrified, but at that moment the twelfth Wise Woman, who had not as yet spoken, came forward and said, "The Princess will not die but will slumber until a hundred years have passed," for she was powerless to take back the ill-wish and could only lessen it.

Now the King, to shield his child from this disaster, commanded that all the (spindles) in the land should be destroyed. As time passed, the Princess manifested all the gifts which the Wise Women had bestowed upon her, and became famous throughout the land for her virtue, beauty and gentleness, so that all loved her who looked upon her.

When her fifteenth birthday dawped, it chanced that the King and Queen were absent from the castle, so that she was quite alone. She wandered through all the rooms, looking about for something to amuse her until she found a winding staircase leading up to a small tower. She climbed up gaily till she came to a door, with a rusty key in the lock.

As she turned this, the door opened wide, and in the room beyond she beheld an old woman

sitting with a spindle in her hand. The Princess greeted her, adding, "What are you doing?"

"I am spinning flax," replied the old woman with a nod.

"What is that which twirls round in your hand?" asked the Princess, and she stretched forth her hand to take the spindle. As soon as she did so the Wise Woman's evil wish was fulfilled; she pricked her finger and instantly sank upon a couch nearby in a deathlike slumber. At the same moment all in the Palace also fell into the deepest sleep. The King and Queen who had just returned, slept amidst their courtiers, the cook in the kitchen, and the horses in the stable; the pigeons on the roof, and the flies on the ceilings; the fire in the grate, and the meat which was roasting, slept or were still. Even the wind in the trees and the leaves on the branches ceased to move. Soon a thicket of thorns and briars began to grow around the castle, becoming taller and thicker year by year until the castle was completely hidden from view, even to the flag upon the turret.

After a time the story went throughout the kingdom of the wondrous Princess Briar Rose, for so they called the sleeping maiden, and again there came Princes from distant lands trying to enter the Palace, but they could not force their way through the thorny thicket, which closed in upon them as they struggled, and pierced them to death.

One day, after long years had passed, there came a Prince to the kingdom who heard by chance an

old peasant relate the story of the thicket of briars and the Palace which it surrounded, wherein slumbered the beautiful Princess Briar Rose and all the royal court who had slept for almost a hundred years. The old man who had related the legend which had been told him by his grandfather, said that all the Princes who had tried to pass through the thicket had perished. The Prince, however, would not be persuaded to give up his attempt, but replied, "I have no fear. I will see the thorny thicket."

Now this day was the very last of all the hundred years that the Princess was to slumber and when the Prince came towards the thicket, behold! the thorns bloomed with Briar Roses at his approach and the thicket opened before him, closing again when he had passed through to the courtyard where dogs and horses lay sleeping. Upon the eaves the pigeons still perched with their heads tucked under their wings.

He entered the Palace, and beheld the cook, who had fallen asleep at the very moment when he was pulling the kitchen-boy's hair, which had remained in his hand; the flies still slept upon the walls, and the courtiers in the hall. He wandered through the rooms till he came to the throne where the King and Queen were slumbering, and last of all he reached the little room in the tower where the Princess was sleeping. He looked down upon her as she reclined and could not take his gaze away from her wondrous beauty. Bending over, he kissed her gently,

and she opened her eyes and smiled a greeting.

Together they descended the winding stair and instantly the King and Queen and all their courtiers awakened and gazed at each other in astonishment; then the dogs barked in the courtyard and the horses neighed in the stables, the pigeons on the roof withdrew their heads from beneath their wings and fluttered away—the flies buzzed up on the walls, the fire began to crackle, and the meat to roast. The cook at last pulled the kitchen-boy's hair, and the whole place became as full of everyday sounds and movement as if nothing had happened.

A splendid wedding was celebrated by the Prince and Briar Rose, who lived happily ever afterwards.

RAPUNZEL

ONCE upon a time, a poor man and his wife longed vainly to have a child. They lived in a small cottage, which had a window at the back, looking into a beautiful garden, full of the most wonderful flowers and vegetables. It was shut in by a very big wall, and no one could enter this garden, because it was the domain of a Witch, who had magic powers, and was feared by all around the country.

One day the wife sat at this window, and saw one of the beds filled with radishes, and these were of such a wonderful freshness and so green,

that she longed to have some. Every day she watched this bed, till at last she became quite ill.

Her husband grew afraid, and asked at last, "What is wrong, my wife?"

"If I cannot have some of those radishes from the garden over there, I shall die," she cried.

At this, the husband, who loved her dearly, grew frightened. "I must get her some," he thought, "for I cannot see her ill. The radishes must be fetched, whatever the cost."

That night, he climbed over the wall of the Witch's garden, and pulling up a handful of the coveted radishes, he returned, and gave them to his wife, who made them into a fine salad.

So much did she enjoy them, that the following day, she had the same desire, and had no rest till her husband promised to get her some more.

That night, he got ready, and began to climb the wall again, but this time no sooner had he reached the top, when he was frightened, for there was the old Witch below, waiting for him. "Well, thief," she cried, scowling at him, "how dare you climb into my garden to steal my radishes. Trouble shall befall you."

"Forgive me," cried the husband. "I have only done this from my great need. My wife is ill with longing for your beautiful radishes which she can see from her window. If she does not have them, she will die."

Then the Witch said, "If that is so, then I

will give you all the radishes you want, but on one condition—you shall give me your child. I will give it every care, and all shall go well with it."

Anxious to get back safely, the husband promised, and later when the child was born, the Witch appeared to claim her reward. She gave the child the name of "Rapunzel," and despite the parents' grief, took the little girl away with her.

Rapunzel grew up strong and beautiful, and when she was about twelve years old, the Witch grew afraid lest she lose her, so she shut her up in a high tower in a wood, and in which there were neither stairs nor door. At the top was but one small window. No one else could enter but the Witch herself. She would stand beneath the window and call out,

"Rapunzel ! Rapunzel!
Let down your hair !"

Rapunzel's hair had grown long and beautiful, fine as spun gold, and when she heard the Witch's words, she would unbind the braids, and opening the window, the hair fell down at least twenty ells in length, and then the Witch would pull herself up by it.

Nearly two years had passed, and it happened that a young Prince was riding through the forest, and noticed the tower. As he reined in his horse, he heard the sound of a voice singing. It was Rapunzel, who whiled away some of the time sing-

ing old songs. The Prince would have liked to have seen the singer, and he looked for a door in the tower, but in vain. So he rode away. But the song lingered in his memory, and he went again and again into the wood, listening to the sweet voice of Rapunzel. As he stood one day, hidden behind a big tree, the Witch came to the tower and the Prince heard her cry,

“Rapunzel ! Rapunzel
Let down your hair ! ”

Down came the lovely ladder of golden hair, and the Witch mounted up and vanished through the window.

“ Ah,” said the Prince, “ if that is the ladder by which one climbs, then I too will try my luck to-morrow.”

The next day, feeling lonely, he returned again to the tower, and cried,

“Rapunzel ! Rapunzel !
Let down your hair ! ”

Again the golden tresses came down, and the Prince climbed up to the window.

Rapunzel cried out with fright when she saw the stranger, for never before had she seen a man ; but the Prince spoke gently to her, and told her how her songs had charmed him, so that he had no happiness until he had seen her for himself.

Rapunzel soon lost all fear of the young and handsome Prince, and when he asked her to become his wife, she thought, “ I would rather

anyone have me than the old Witch," and she consented. "I will certainly go with you," she said, "but I do not know how I can get down. Bring with you, next time, a skein of silken thread, and I will weave a ladder, down which I can come, and I will ride away with you."

They arranged that they would only see one another at eventime, as the Witch only came by day. But one day Rapunzel said, child-like, "Why is it, mother, that you find it harder to come up to me, than the young Prince, who comes up in a moment?"

The Witch was furious. "You wicked child," she exclaimed. "Do I hear aright? I thought I had kept you free from the world, and yet you have deceived me."

Seizing Rapunzel by her beautiful braids of hair, in her anger, she gave her several hard blows, and then taking out her shears, she cut off all the beautiful strands, letting them remain on the ground, while she carried off the unhappy girl into a big desert. Here she left her to die alone and unattended.

In the evening, the Witch tied the shorn tresses to the window frame, and when the Prince came and cried,

"Rapunzel! Rapunzel!
Let down your hair!"

the Witch let fall the braids of hair. The Prince ascended, but when he reached the window top, he found instead of his beautiful bride, the ugly Witch, who gazed at him furiously.

“ So, my good man,” she cried, “ you came to see your pretty bride ; but the golden bird is no longer singing in her nest, the cat has stolen her, and now means to scratch your eyes out. Rapunzel is lost to you for ever.”

The Prince almost maddened by the Witch's words, jumped from the window, and falling on the thorns beneath, his eyes were put out. So he wandered in the wood, blinded, not knowing where he was, or what to do ; living on such fruits and berries as he could feel, weeping and mourning for his young wife.

Thus in grief, he wandered about, for many years, till he came to the desert in which Rapunzel had found a home, despite the dangers. Here had been born her little son and daughter, and she lived, but always sorrowing. The Prince heard a voice, and followed in its direction. Rapunzel knew him at once, and embraced him tenderly. Her tears fell on his eyelids, and lo, his eyes became clear ; his sight was restored once more. Then he took her to his kingdom, where all rejoiced to have their Prince back again, and he lived with Rapunzel for many years in joy and happiness. No one ever knew what had become of the Witch, nor did they care.

THE SEVEN CROWS

ONCE upon a time, there lived a man and his wife who had seven sons. They longed for a little girl, and at last when their wish was granted, they were overjoyed ; but the little one was so tiny and delicate, that they were bidden to have her baptised as soon as possible lest she die.

Now there was a famous well of pure water not far away, and the father summoned one of the brothers and bade him take a jug to this well and bring back the pure spring water. The little boy was only too pleased, but the other brothers also wanted to go with him, and as each one wanted to be the first to get the water, in their struggle, the jug fell into the well. The boys were frightened, and did not know what to do for the best ; they were even afraid to go home and confess the accident to their father.

Meanwhile the father waited anxiously for their return, and at last he exclaimed, " Ah, the young rascals ! I suppose they have forgotten all about the water, and are playing about as usual ! " As time passed he grew angry, for he feared the baby girl would die unbaptised. At last he cried out angrily :

" I wish they had become crows, for they are useless to me."

The wish was scarcely uttered, when he heard the whirring of wings over his head, and there above him, flew seven black crows, circling round and round the house.

The father was grief-stricken at the effect of his careless speech, but it was too late to recall it. The birds flew away in the distance, and all the sorrowing parents could do, was to lavish every care possible on the little girl left to them.

She soon grew strong, and also more beautiful, as the days wore on. For many years, too, she believed herself to be the only child, for her parents never spoke of the brothers lest she should grieve their loss. But one day she overheard one of the neighbours, as she passed, say, "Oh yes, she is pretty enough, but she cost the life of her seven brothers."

The maiden could not understand what was meant, so when she got home, she went straight to her father and mother, and told them what she had heard. The parents were sad because they did not blame the girl at all; it was the father's sin, not hers. They told her the whole story, and how the boys had been transformed by the impious wish.

The girl said no more, but still she blamed herself, and constantly wondered how she could find her brothers and get them transformed into their proper shape.

As the days passed, she grew more and more determined to find them, no matter what she suffered in doing so. So early one morning she arose, and set forth on her journey. She took from home, a tiny ring which her parents had given her for her birthday, some bread and water to sustain her from hunger and thirst and a little wooden stool on which to rest.



THE SEVEN CROWS
The maiden who had remained in the chimney corner
came forward . . . [see page 76]

Over hill and dale, she travelled, till at last she came to the world's edge, where she found the Sun, but his heat scorched up little children, and she was afraid to go near him, so she turned and fled, till later, she came to the Moon. But the Moon was cold, and a voice cried, "What can I smell? Yes, I can smell human flesh." Again the maiden turned and fled, till at last she found the Stars. These were very kind to her, as they sat on their seats and looked down on the world. Only the Morning-Star stood up, and he called down to her. "Be not afraid little girl, but take this bone!" and he threw down a small crooked bone adding, "If you keep this bone, you will be able to unlock the door of the crystal castle in which, further on, you will find your brothers."

The maiden thanked him very much and took the bone, wrapping it up in her handkerchief. Then she started off once more, and at length she came to a castle of crystal, glittering in the early sunlight. Its door was closed, and she took out her handkerchief to find the crooked bone which the Morning-Star had given her. Alas, it had gone; she had dropped it as she had climbed the last hill. Now she knew not what to do, but save her brothers she must. All at once, she looked at her fingers, surely one of these might serve her purpose.

So she put her little finger into the keyhole and twisted it round till at last to her joy, the lock turned and she was able to open the door. She found herself in a big hall, and a little Dwarf hurried towards her.

"Well, little maid, what do you want?" he said, kindly enough.

"I have come far to find my brothers, the seven crows," she said.

The Dwarf replied, "My masters are away, but they will return later, and if you like, you may wait here till they come. You can sit down in that corner if you wish."

The little girl was only too glad to rest, and to think that her search was ended.

Some hours passed, and then the Dwarf began to prepare the table for the crows' meal. He brought in seven cups, and some deep dishes, and as they went in and out, the maiden, took a tiny piece from each dish, and sipped a few drops from each cup, but in the last one she let fall the ring which had been given her for remembrance.

Presently there sounded a loud cawing and the swishing of birds' wings, and the Dwarf said, "Here are my masters coming home."

In a few moments, the big crows came into the hall, and each one went to his own accustomed seat.

Then one cried out, "Who has been eating from my plate?" and another said, "Yes, someone has been drinking from my cup. I can smell a human being has been here."

But when the seventh crow looked into his cup, he saw the ring, and recognised it as one his mother had worn. Then he said, "Oh, if only our sister were here, we would be saved."

At these words, the maiden, who had remained

in the chimney corner, came forward, and when she touched them, each crow became a human being again. They kissed her joyfully, then after they had had their meal, the little party went back to rejoice the hearts of their parents.

“ SNOW-WHITE ”

ONCE upon a time, in the winter, when the snow fell thick and fast, a Queen was seated by the Palace window, sewing and looking out now and then at the glistening flakes. Suddenly she pricked her finger, and there fell upon the snow three drops of blood. The Queen looked at the bright drops and thought, “ I wish I could have a child with a skin as white as snow, and lips as red as blood and hair as black as ebony.” Not long after this the Queen’s daughter was born ; her skin was snow white, her lips scarlet and her hair black as ebony. For this reason the child was called “ Snow-White ” ; but at the child’s birth the Queen died.

The following year, the King married again : his Queen was very handsome indeed, but so vain that she could not bear the idea of anyone else being as beautiful as she was herself.

Her mirror was a magic one, and when she stood in front of it and said,

“ Tell me, mirror on the wall,
Who is the fairest of us all ? ”

The mirror would reply,

“Thou art the fairest, lady Queen,”

and then she would be satisfied, for the mirror was bound by magic to tell the truth. But as the child, Snow-White, grew older she became more beautiful every day, until at last the hour came when the Queen said to her mirror,

“Tell me, mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all?”

and the mirror was forced to reply truly,

“Thou art fair, my lady Queen,
Snow-White is fairest ever seen.”

This answer so angered the Queen that she turned pale with rage, and hated Snow-White from that moment. She could not sleep for jealous fury, until at last she said to one of the King's huntsmen, “You must take Snow-White into the woods and kill her. I can no longer bear to know that she lives. Bring back her heart to show me.”

The huntsman promised to obey, and took Snow-White into the forest, but when he pulled forth his knife the maiden cried piteously, “Spare my life dear huntsman and I will run far into the forest and never come back.”

Snow-White's beauty and gentle speech touched the huntsman's heart and he answered, “Go, then, poor child,” thinking that the wild beasts would soon kill her, but at least it would

not have been by his knife. The next moment a wild boar came rushing through the wood and the huntsman swiftly caught and killed it, taking back its heart to show to the Queen.

So poor Snow-White was left alone to wander through the forest not knowing which way to go, scratched by the thorns and bruised by the stones as she stumbled on. Wild animals leapt up as she passed but did not harm her and at last, when tired out she could go no farther in the darkening forest, she came upon a cottage almost concealed by the trees, and went in to rest awhile.

Within everything was orderly but very small, and a little table stood in the room laid with a white cloth and seven little plates, seven little mugs and seven little knives and forks. Seven chairs were round the table and seven little beds stood in a row by the wall, each with a clean white coverlet upon it. Snow-White took a few crumbs of bread from each little plate and a few drops of water from each little mug, for though she was hungry and thirsty she did not want to take too much from anyone. Then, being tired out, she tried all the little beds, but one was too small, another too hard and so on until she came to the seventh which just suited her, and thanking Heaven for leading her to the cottage, she fell fast asleep.

Just at nightfall, the seven dwarfs who lived in the cottage and worked in the mountains beyond the forest came home. First they lit seven candles and noticed at once that someone had been in their neat and tidy cottage.

"Who has eaten from my plate?" said one. "Who has drunk from my mug?" said another. "Who has sat upon my chair?" asked the third. "Who has cut with my knife?" cried the fourth. "Who has used my spoon?" said the fifth. "Who has taken my fork?" asked the sixth; but the seventh little man looked round and said, "Who is lying in my bed?"



"Who has eaten from my plate?"

and he called to his comrades to come and see, and they all held up their candles to look at the sleeping Snow-White. "How beautiful she is," they whispered to each other, and they were so pleased with her loveliness that the kind little men forbore to awaken her, but let her rest in the bed of the seventh dwarf, who passed the

night by sleeping one hour with each of his comrades,

Snow-White awoke at dawn and was much afraid when she saw the seven dwarfs, but they spoke to her very kindly, asking her name. “ I am called Snow-White,” she said.

“ Why have you come here ? ” they questioned, and she told them of her stepmother’s cruel design to kill her and of the huntsman who had taken pity on her, and of her wanderings in the forest until she had come to their cottage. When she had related all this, the dwarfs asked, “ Will you stay here and keep house for us ? If you will cook and sew and wash for us you can stay here, and we will shield you from harm.”

“ Yes,” answered Snow-White, “ most heartily and thankfully too.” So she stayed with them and kept their cottage clean and tidy. The dwarfs went off into the mountains in the mornings to delve for gold, and when they came home at nightfall their meal was laid ready and the cottage orderly. But Snow-White was left alone all day, so the little men bade her, “ Let no one come in, for your stepmother will soon discover that you are here.”

Meanwhile, the Queen, thinking that the huntsman had put Snow-White to death in the forest, believed herself again more beautiful than anyone living, and as she stood before her mirror one day she asked again.

‘ Tell me, mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all ? ’

and it answered :

“Thou the fairest wert, O Queen ;
Snow-White is fairest ever seen ;
Midst the woodlands dusky green
She lives with seven dwarfs I ween.”

At this the Queen was terrified, as she knew that the Huntsman must have let Snow-White live despite her commands, and she pondered day and night how to achieve her designs, since she could not sleep for jealousy.

One day an idea came to her, and, staining her fair face brown, she disguised herself as an old woman with goods to sell, and went through the forest till she found the cottage of the seven dwarfs. Knocking at the door she cried, “Goods to sell, fine goods to sell !” and Snow-White, looking from the window, asked, “What have you to sell, good woman ?”

“Stays of many colours, fine goods,” replied the pedlar, holding up a pair for Snow-White to see. “Surely I may let this old woman enter,” thought the maiden, so she unfastened the door and bought the pair of stays.

“How well it becomes you my child,” cried the old woman, “let me lace it for you.” So, fearing no evil, Snow-White let her lace the stays, but the pedlar pulled them in so tightly that she could not breathe and fell to the ground as though dead. “At last,” said the disguised Queen as she hastened away, “I am again the fairest in the land.”

When the seven dwarfs returned at nightfall

they were horrified at finding their little Snow-White seemingly lifeless upon the ground. As they raised her they noticed how tightly she was laced, and cut the strings, so that in a little while she began to breathe once more. When she related to them what had happened, the dwarfs said, "The pedlar was most surely your cruel stepmother. Be more careful, and do not let *any* one enter when we are away."

When the Queen returned home, she went straight to her mirror, saying once more :

" Tell me, mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all ? "

And the mirror answered :

' Thou the fairest wert, O Queen ;
Snow-White is fairest ever seen.
Amidst the woodlands dusky green,
She lives with seven dwarfs I ween."

When she heard this, the blood flew to her head with terror to think that Snow-White was still alive. " Some way *must* I find," she vowed, " to accomplish her death." So next she took a comb, and used her magic skill to poison it ; then once more she disguised herself, this time as an old widow, and set out again for the dwarf's cottage, where, tapping at the door she cried, " Goods to sell, goods to sell." And Snow-White looked out and called to her, " Away, away, good woman, I may not let you enter." " Will you not even look at this ? " asked the old woman

holding up the poisoned comb. And Snow-White was so delighted with the comb, that she forgot all else, and unfastened the door.

When she had bought the comb, the woman said, "Let me comb your beautiful hair with it," and Snow-White let her do as she wished. But no sooner was the poisoned comb drawn once through her hair than she fell to the ground as though lifeless. "Now," exclaimed the disguised Queen triumphantly, "at last I am rid of you," and she returned once more to the Palace.

The seven dwarfs came home soon after she had gone, and when they found Snow-White lying on the ground as if lifeless they felt sure that her stepmother had been there. Finding the comb in her hair, they quickly pulled it out, and presently Snow-White breathed again and told them all that had taken place. Once more they warned her not to let anyone enter lest it be her wicked stepmother.

By this time the Queen had reached the Palace, and once more questioned the mirror, which made the same reply as before :

"Thou the fairest wert, O Queen ;
Snow-White is fairest ever seen."

Hearing this she was frantic with rage, and vowed that she would kill Snow-White at all costs, so she took an apple and in the privacy of her own chamber contrived to fill it with poison so deadly that whoever ate of it must die, though outwardly it looked rosy and sweet enough to make one's mouth water. When it was

finished she once more disguised herself, this time as an old peasant woman, and then made her way to the dwarf's cottage.

As soon as she tapped at the door, Snow-White peeped out and called, “ I must not let *any* one in, the seven dwarfs have forbidden it.”

“ Alas,” lamented the peasant woman, “ must I then take back all my apples ? However, I will give you this one.”

“ Oh no,” said the maiden, “ I may not take it.”

“ Oh ! ” jeered the woman, “ are you frightened to eat it ? See I will cut it in two, you may eat the rosy half and I will eat the green half myself.” (For the apple was so cunningly prepared that only the rosy part was poisoned.)

When Snow-White saw the old woman eat part of the apple, she could not help longing for the rosy-cheeked half, and at last was persuaded to take it. But no sooner had she bitten off a piece than she fell lifeless to the ground. Laughing wickedly, the old woman cried, “ Snow-White, blood red and black as ebony. The dwarfs will not revive you this time.” As soon as she returned, she questioned the mirror again .

“ Tell me, mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all ? ”

and it replied :

“ Thou the fairest art, O Queen. ’

So her jealous heart was set at rest, as much as so wicked a heart could ever rest.

But the seven dwarfs found Snow-White lying upon the ground when they returned that evening, and this time she seemed to be quite dead.

Raising her gently they searched for anything that could have been poisoned, but could find nothing; their dear little maid was really dead. So they placed her on a bier, and stood round it weeping ceaselessly for three days. Then they meant to bury her, but she looked so fair and life-like with her rosy cheeks, which had not paled, that they said to one another, "We will not bury her in the dark ground." So they had a case made all of glass, so that they could see her from every side when they laid her within it, and had her name painted upon it in gold letters which said, "Princess Snow-White." Then they laid the case upon a great rock, and took it in turns to watch beside it, and the birds and wild beasts of the forest came, and lamented the death of the maiden.

Snow-White lay for a long time in the glass case, looking as if she were asleep, for she was still unchanged; until, one day, a King's son came riding through the forest, and saw the glass case with the golden letters upon it and Snow-White seemingly asleep inside. At this moment the dwarfs came by and he asked them about the case saying, "If you will let me have it, I will pay you whatever you ask." and the dwarfs replied, "We would not part with it for all the money in the world." But the Prince pleaded for it saying, "I cannot live without it and will

protect and honour Snow-White all my life.” Then the dwarfs perceived that he was in earnest and at last out of pity for him, they gave him the case, which the Prince ordered to be carried along upon the shoulders of his attendants.

After a while one of them fell over a stone in the path, and the shock caused the bite of poisoned apple in Snow-White’s mouth to fall out. Presently she raised her eyelids, and pushing open the lid of the case, she sat up in it and said, “Where am I ? ”

“You are safe with me,” replied the Prince delighted to hear her speak. Then he told her what had happened and asked her to come with him to his father’s castle and be his bride. Snow-White gave her consent and they proceeded to the King’s castle where the wedding was immediately celebrated with all due rejoicings. Snow-White’s wicked stepmother was invited to the festivities, and as she arrayed herself before the mirror she again asked :

“Tell me, mirror on the wall,
Who is fairest of us all ? ”

and to her horror it answered :

“Thou the fairest wert, O Queen,
The Prince’s bride is fairer I ween.”

Then the Queen was furious indeed, for, she thought, here was a new rival. She made up her mind not to go to the wedding, but her

desire to see the young Queen was too strong for her, and she resolved to see for herself whether the mirror spoke truly. When she saw Snow-White by the Prince's side she stood as if rooted to the ground with terror and fury. Then a pair of red-hot shoes were placed before her, and she was obliged to put them on and dance in them, until at last she fell dead.

HANS IN LUCK

HAVING served his master for seven long years, Hans wanted to return home, so he said to his master one day, "Sir, I have served my full time now and I want to go back to my mother."

"Ah," replied his master, "you have done very well and I think you deserve a good return." So saying he handed Hans a lump of gold as big as his fist. Hans wrapped the gold in his handkerchief which he hung over his back, and set out for the village in which his mother lived.

While he was slowly going along the road, with lagging steps, a horseman trotted by, on a fine steed.

Hans said aloud, "How good that looks! It is like sitting on a stool and yet getting on quickly, without kicking the cobbles or wearing out one's shoes."

The rider overhearing him answered, "Why then do you walk?"

"Because I must drag this weight along. It is gold," said Hans, "and it makes my back ache so that I can hardly bear it."

"How would you like to exchange it?" said the rider, "you can have this horse in return for your lump of gold."

"By all means," cried Hans, "but you will find it a heavy load."

The rider dismounted and, having taken the gold, put Hans on the horse. Then he gave him the reins, and said, "When you want the horse to go faster you must cry, 'Gee up, Gee up!' and cluck like this with your tongue."

No happier man than Hans could be found, riding easily along, but presently he thought it would be nicer if he went at a quicker pace, so he did what the rider had told him, and said, "Gee up! Gee up!" to the horse, which soon went off at a sharp trot, and before Hans could think of what to do, he was thrown head over heels into a ditch at the side of the road. Then the horse would have bolted right away, but it was stopped by a peasant driving a cow along the road.

When Hans had picked himself up out of the ditch, he was very angry indeed, and said to the villager, "That riding is very bad sport, when you are on top of a beast which throws you so that you nearly break your neck. I will not ride any more. I would rather have your cow."

"Well," said the peasant, "that is easily done.

I will give you my cow if you will give me your horse."

Hans very willingly consented to this, and the peasant, jumping upon the horse, rode off as fast as he could.

So Hans drove his cow steadily in front of him and thought what a lucky bargain he had made. "I have a bit of bread, and when I please, I can have butter and cheese to eat with it, and if I become thirsty I can milk the cow and have a good drink, so what more could I desire?"

Soon he came to an inn where he stopped to eat the bread he had brought for his midday meal, spending his last two pence on a glass of beer to wash it down.

Having finished his meal, he again drove his cow along the road in the direction of his mother's home.

The heat became greater as mid-day approached, and then Hans came to a large common which he could not cross in less than an hour. His mouth felt dry, and his legs felt weary.

"I must at least quench my thirst," he thought, "I will have a drink of milk," and halted to fasten his cow to a tree.

He intended to use his leather cap as a pail, but try as he would he could not milk the cow.

Before long the animal grew impatient of his clumsy efforts and kicked him so hard that he fell to the ground almost senseless. Luckily, at that moment a butcher chanced to pass that way wheeling a barrow in which a pig was squealing.

He pulled Hans to his feet asking, "What has happened to you?"

Hans told the butcher what the cow had done, and the man gave him a flask, saying, "Have a drink from that. Your cow could not give you any milk. It is too old; the beast is worthless except to be killed for meat."

"Oh," cried Hans, as he pulled at his hair, "who would have thought of that? What a misfortune for me! I do not like cow's flesh. It is so tough. Now if it were a pig like yours it would be a very different matter; one could certainly have some fine sausages."

"If you like my pig," replied the butcher, "I will exchange it for your cow."

"That I will indeed," cried Hans, "and may Heaven bless you"; giving the butcher his cow, he received the pig from the barrow and journeyed on homewards well satisfied.

As he walked along, he mused upon what had happened, feeling that the troubles which had beset him on the road had turned out for the best. Before long he met a farmer's lad holding a big white goose. After greeting one another Hans began to tell him about the pig he was driving, and the lad in his turn spoke of the goose he was holding, which he said was to be killed for a christening feast. "Just lift it up," he said, "and see how heavy it is; for the last eight weeks we have been fattening it, and now! whoever cooks and eats it will not forget his meal for many a week."

Hans replied, as he lifted the great bird in

both hands, "It is as you say, a fine bird, but my pig is no light weight either."

The farmer's lad looked serious, as he replied, with a doubtful shake of his head, "I should not be surprised if that pig caused you some trouble before you have made bacon of him."

"I heard in the village yonder that a pig has been stolen from the farmer's sty, and this looks to me as though it might be the very one. The farmer has sent out all his hands to look for it, and you may be sent to prison if it is found with you, I should hide it somewhere."

This news threw Hans into a great state of fright, and he exclaimed, "Heaven help me! Can you not find a way out of the trouble? You know these parts better than I do, and could find a safe hiding-place for the pig. Will you exchange it for your goose?"

But the farmer's lad hesitated. "I shall have to take a risk by doing such a thing," said he. "However, rather than see you sent to prison, I will do as you wish," and, seizing the cord which held the pig, he led it along a narrow lane, while Hans, untroubled once more, journeyed on towards his home, with his goose in his arms, well pleased to have made such a fortunate exchange.

"This will make a fine dinner," he thought, "besides the fat, which will give me enough goose-grease to use for many months; then again, all the soft feathers will stuff a pillow which should bring me deep sleep and sweet dreams indeed, besides giving great pleasure to my mother."

Arriving at the last village on that road, he saw a knife-grinder by the roadside singing as he twirled his wheel :

“ Over hills and through valleys so gaily I rove,
What care I for troubles, while the blue sky's above,
There is no one so happy as I.”

Hans stood still looking at the Grinder for a few minutes, and then said, “ You appear to have plenty of work as well as good spirits.”

“ Ah,” quoth the Grinder, “ there is no trade to equal mine. I can always jingle money in my pockets.” Looking at the goose beneath Hans' arm, he added, “ How did you come by that fine bird ? ”

“ I bartered a pig for it,” said Hans.

“ How came you by the pig ? ”

“ I gave a fine cow for it.”

“ How did you get the cow ? ”

“ In exchange for a horse.”

“ Who gave you the horse ? ”

“ I exchanged a big lump of gold for it.”

“ Where did you find the gold ? ”

“ I served a master for seven years to earn it.”

“ Well,” said the Grinder, “ I see that you have done very well for yourself at each exchange, but if you could jingle money every time you put your hand in your pockets, you would do still better.”

“ But how is that to be done ? ” said Hans.

“ Why,” replied the man, “ you ought to become a grinder like myself ; for this trade

nothing else is required but a grindstone, and your money will find itself. This is but little worn and if you wish, I will exchange it for your goose. What do you say ? ”

“ Why, of course,” replied Hans, “ I shall think myself the luckiest of men, to be able to jingle money in my pockets at any time. Here is the goose ! ”

At this the grinder stooped down and took a large flint from the road, which he gave to Hans exclaiming, “ Now here is a fine stone indeed ; take care of it and you will soon learn to sharpen even old nails.”

Hans went on again happily with his flints, his face beaming with pleasure as he thought, “ I seem to have been born to good fortune ; all that I want is given to me freely.”

By this time Hans, who had been journeying since early morn, began to feel weary and faint. He had spent all he had at the inn, and the stones weighed him down until he could drag them no further. Coming to the banks of a stream, he contrived to rest the stones upon the brink while he bent down to quench his thirst. Before he could stop them, however, the heavy stones rolled down the bank into the water, and Hans stared at them for a few minutes in dismay. Then he jumped to his feet, tearfully thanking Heaven that he was freed from his burden.

“ How lucky I am,” he exclaimed, “ now I have nothing to carry.”

Then he travelled onwards gaily until he reached his mother's house, at last free from care.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

ONCE upon a time there lived a miller, who had a most lovely daughter, and having to speak with the King one day, he said—wishing to be thought of great importance—that his daughter possessed the gift of being able to spin gold out of straw. Now the King was exceedingly fond of gold, and he thought, “That would be a skill which would indeed delight me,” and he bade the miller “Bring your gifted daughter to the Palace to-morrow, and I will test her skill.”

When the maiden arrived, the King took her into a room which was filled with straw, and showed her a spinning-wheel and a bobbin. “Now,” he said, “set to work and spin gold from this straw. If it is not finished at daybreak you shall die.”

So saying, the King left her alone, closing the door behind him.

The maiden sat on and on, wondering how she might escape death, since she knew naught of any way by which gold could be spun from straw ; and she grew so bewildered that at length she wept bitterly.

Suddenly a door sprang open and a dwarf appeared, saying, “Greetings, fair maid ! Why are you crying so bitterly ? ”

“Alas,” she answered, “I have to spin gold out of this straw and I know not how to do so.”

“If I help you,” said the dwarf, “what will be my reward ? ”

"I will give you my necklet," she replied.

The little man accepted the necklet, and, seating himself at the wheel, whirled it around three times, and behold! the reel was filled with gold. He set up a second bobbin and whirled the wheel around three times more, and this, too, was filled, and thus he sat all through the night until all the bobbins were filled with gold and all the straw was gone.

At dawn next morning, the King came in, and was delighted to see all the golden bobbins; but instead of being satisfied, they made him feel more covetous than ever.

He led the maiden into a larger room, filled with straw, and told her to spin it into gold before the morrow, or she would die.

Again she sat weeping until the dwarf suddenly appeared in the room, and asked her what she would give him for his help.

"I will give you my ring," she replied.

The dwarf took the ring and began to spin at a great rate, so that by sunrise all the straw was spun into glittering gold.

In the morning, the King came to see the gold she had spun, and was more pleased than ever at sight of it all; but he did not tell the maiden so. Instead he took her to the biggest room she had ever seen, filled to the very ceiling with piles of straw.

"If you can spin *this* roomful of straw into gold in one night," he said, "I will make you my Queen." "For," he thought, "I could not find a wealthier bride in all the world."

The poor miller's daughter began to despair when she saw the huge roomful of straw to be spun; and when the dwarf appeared for the third time and asked her what she would give him for his assistance, she had perforce to answer sadly, "I have nothing left to give you."

"Then," said the dwarf, "promise me your first child if you should become Queen."

The maiden hesitated. "Who knows," she thought, "whether that will ever happen?"

So, being in a desperate plight herself, she gave the dwarf the promise he demanded. Then the little man again sat down to the wheel, and finished spinning all the straw into gold in a very short time. In the morning when the King came and saw all the gold spun once more as he had demanded, he was overjoyed, and speedily made the miller's daughter his Queen. It was little more than a year after the wedding, when she had long forgotten all about the dwarf and her promise, that the Queen's first child was born.

In the midst of the general rejoicings, the little man suddenly appeared, and demanded the fulfilment of her promise. The Queen was terrified, and offered him all she possessed if he would only leave her the child, but the dwarf said, "No! I would rather have the child than all the riches in your kingdom."

At this the Queen sobbed so bitterly that the little man took pity on her and said, "I will give you three days to think about it; if in that time, you can guess my name, I will not take away your child."

So saying, he disappeared leaving the poor Queen to think of all the names she had ever heard of, and to send all over the kingdom to collect new ones.

Next morning the dwarf appeared again, and the Queen began to guess his name. Was it "Caspar?" she said, then "Melchior?" "Balthasar," and so on, but each time the dwarf answered, "No! that is not my name."



Round this fire a little man was hopping.

On the second day, the Queen asked everyone for all the out-of-the-way names they could think of, such as "Whalebone," "Ribs-of-Beef," "Sheep-shank," and so on, but at each name the little man shook his head.

On the third day, just when the Queen was beginning to despair, one of her messengers came back with some news for her.

"I could not find a single new name," he said, "but when I came to the foot of the high mountain at the edge of the great wood, I found a cottage with a big fire burning in front of the door. Round this fire a little man was hopping, singing as he leapt up and down :

To-day I'll brew, to-morrow I'll bake,
Soon I will the Queen's child take ;
How lucky it is that no one knows,
That my name is Rumpelstiltskin '."

When the Queen heard this, she was delighted, and as soon as the dwarf appeared she began to ask him if his name was "Conrad" or "Carl?"

"No!" cried the dwarf. "Only one more guess, and then the child is mine."

"Then," said the Queen, "your name is Rumpelstiltskin."

"A witch has told you," screamed the little man in a rage, and he stamped his foot so hard on the ground that it stuck deep in the earth and he could not pull it out again.

At last with all his strength he tore it right off, and went hopping away, howling dreadfully, and from that day to this the Queen has never heard any more of him.

CLEVER ALICE

ONCE upon a time there lived a man and his wife whose daughter was named "Clever Alice."

"We must see about a husband for her," said her father, when she grew up, and her mother agreed, adding, "but where shall we find one good enough for her?"

One day a young man named Hans travelled a long way to propose to her, making a condition to her parents that she must be prudent as well as clever. Her father declared that Alice had a wonderful head, and her mother vowed that "Alice can see the wind and hear the flies talking."

"Very good," said Hans, "but I will not marry her if she is not prudent also." So when they were all seated at dinner her mother said, "Go down to the cellar Alice and bring up some beer." Then taking the jug from the shelf Clever Alice went down to the cellar, pulled a stool into place and sat down in front of the beer barrel so that she might not have to bend over and perhaps hurt her back. Placing the can in front of her she turned on the tap and let the beer run, amusing herself in looking about upon the walls and peeping in all the corners. Presently she saw an axe left by the bricklayer sticking out of the ceiling overhead.

Then Clever Alice began to weep, crying, "Oh, if I marry Hans, and have a child, when he grows big enough we might send him down here to

fetch beer and then the axe might fall down and kill him." Whereupon she wept more violently than before. Soon her parents grew tired of waiting for her and sent the maid down to see what was delaying her. The girl found Alice sitting by the beer barrel weeping and asked what was the matter.

"Oh, oh," sobbed Alice, "matter enough! If I marry Hans and we have a child and send him down here to fetch the beer that axe will fall down upon him and kill him."

"Ah," said the servant, "Clever Alice to think of that," and she too began to cry, thinking of all the trouble that was to befall them.

Meanwhile the good people upstairs were wondering what had happened and were also growing very thirsty, so Alice's father sent the boy to see what was keeping Alice and the maid in the cellar. The boy found both Alice and the maid weeping bitterly and asked them the cause of their trouble, and Alice told him her tale of the child and the axe which might fall. "Clever Alice to think of it," the boy cried, when she had done, and he sat down and wept with the others.

Still they waited upstairs, and then as the boy did not come back the father said to the mother, "Will you go down, wife, and see what has happened to Alice." So the mother went down to the cellar, where all three sat weeping and asked what was the matter. Alice told her tale of the axe which would surely fall and kill the son she might have and her mother also said: "Clever Alice to think of such a thing,"

and she likewise sat down and wept with the others.

Presently the father grew so very thirsty and tired of waiting that he exclaimed, "I will go down myself and see what has happened to our Alice." He hastily descended to the cellar where he saw the four of them all weeping together, and having asked the reason, he also cried, "Clever Alice to think of such a thing," and sitting down began to weep with the others.

At last Hans began to think there must be something very serious the matter and found his way down to the cellar where they all sat weeping and moaning each one louder than the other.

"What trouble has happened?" he cried, and Alice sobbed, "Oh, Hans, if we should marry and have a son, when he is grown up we might send him down here to draw the beer and that axe which has been left sticking in the ceiling might fall on him and perhaps kill him. Is not that enough to weep about?"

"Ah," exclaimed Hans. "Clever Alice to think of such a thing. You are indeed prudent enough to be my wife," and so taking her hand he led her to his home and they were married.

One morning soon after the wedding, Hans said to his young wife, "I must go this day to the town to bring some money: you go to the fields and fetch some corn to grind for bread."

"I will do so, dear Hans," said Alice, and when he had gone, she cooked for herself a good meal to take with her. When she came to the corn-

fields she thought, "Now what shall I do, eat first or cut the corn first? Ah, I will eat first." So she ate the mess of pottage she had brought and when she had finished she said to herself, "What now? Shall I sleep first or reap first? Yes, I think I will sleep first," so she lay down amidst the corn and slept. After a time Hans came home and found that Alice had not returned, so he thought, "My wife is still working and does not even come back to eat something. What a prudent Alice she is." However, when evening came on and still she did not return Hans went to the cornfields to see how much she had done, and there he found Alice sound asleep amidst the uncut corn! He ran home as fast as he could and fetched a net with little bells fastened on it which he put over her head as she lay asleep. Then he went home and shut the door of his house and sat down to his work again. When night fell, Clever Alice awakened, and as she stood up, the little bells on the net over her hair jingled as she walked.

She grew frightened and began to wonder if she were really herself at all. "Am I Clever Alice or am I not?" she asked herself, but she could not answer her own question, and stood wondering for a long time. Then she made up her mind to go home and ask. "Surely," she thought, "they would know," but when she got there she found the door shut fast, so knocking at the window she called, "Hans, is Alice at home?" and Hans replied, "Yes she is."

"Oh," cried Alice horrified, "Oh Heavens,

then I am not Clever Alice." So she went to the next house and knocked, but when the people within heard the bells jingling they would not open the door, nor would any other of the neighbours. So terrified was she that she ran away from the village and no one ever heard of her again.

KING THRUSH-BEARD

ONCE upon a time, there lived a king, who had a beautiful daughter. She was so proud and haughty, that no bridegroom could be found to please her. Not only did she refuse to marry them, but she made fun of them and laughed them to scorn.

At last, her father announced a great feast, and invited all the young nobles from countries far and near.

When they arrived, they were received in their order of rank. First came the young kings, then the princes, the dukes, the marquesses, the earls, and last of all, the barons.

Then the Princess herself came down to greet them, but as usual she found fault with everyone. One was as fat as a wine-tub. Another so lanky as to look like a larch tree. Another was too stout to be clever; another too pale; while yet another looked like a parrot! So she went from one to the other, laughing and finding unpleasant nick-names for all. At last she came to a young king who was quite handsome, but his chin

seemed a little bit crooked. "Ha, ha," laughed the Princess. "His chin looks like a thrush's beak!"

And from that day onward, the king gained the nick-name of "Thrush-beard."

The old King, when he found that his daughter only mocked and made fun of these suitors, any one of whom was quite fitted to be her bridegroom, grew very angry, and at last he said that as there were no more suitors of fitting rank to come to her, she should marry the first beggar who came to the castle gates.

The guests departed, and a few days later, a singer appeared at the gates, and sang some ballads. The King heard him and ordered him to be brought to his presence; then he sent for the Princess.

When the singer came into the throne room, it was seen that he was all in rags.

The King commanded him to sing again, and when he had finished, the King said: "You sing well, and I will reward you with my daughter as your bride."

The Princess pleaded in vain; her father said: "It is too late, I gave my word to bestow you on the first beggar, and now I must keep my word." So the priests were called, and the princess was married to the beggar-singer. She begged to be allowed to remain in the castle, but this her father would not allow.

"No," he said. "You must follow the fortunes of your husband. Go forth with him, and see what the world is like."

So the strolling singer led her forth, and made her walk beside him on the rough stony roads.

Soon they came to a large forest, and the princess asked, "To whom belongs this forest fine?"

The beggar replied, "To King 'Thrush-beard' the good; had you wedded him, it would have been thine!"

"Ah!" sighed the tired princess. "If only I had not been so foolish!"

Presently they came to smooth rolling meadows, and again the princess wondered to whom they belonged.

She was told again, "King 'Thrush-beard,'" and when later they passed through a great city, she found this was the capital of King Thrush-beard's country.

"Ah, if only I had married the king, instead of laughing at him," lamented the princess.

"Stop crying," said the beggar, her husband. "You have married me. I am your husband, and must be good enough for you."

At last they came to a very small hut, where the singer stopped. The Princess cried, "Ah, heavens! to whom does this wretched hut belong?"

Then her husband cried, "This is our home, where we are going to live."

The beautiful, tall princess had to stoop before she could enter, and when she was inside, she looked round in horror.

"Where are the servants?" she asked.

"Servants?" cried the singer. "We are too poor for servants. You must do the work yourself. Light a fire and put on a pot to cook my dinner, for I am tired and hungry."

But the princess had never even seen a pot put on to a fire, much less cooked a meal of any



CLIVER ALICE
they all sat weeping and moaning each one louder than
the other.

[see page 76]

kind; so at last, the beggar, scolding and grumbling, had to set to himself. There was not much to eat, so they went early to bed. In the morning the husband awakened the princess early and bade her set the house in order; but the princess could do nothing but cry.

At last the little store of food came to an end. Then the husband said: "This will not do. If you cannot cook, then you must work. You shall weave some baskets. I will go and cut the rushes for you."

He went forth and soon brought back a bundle of rushes, but they cut the soft fingers of the princess, making them bleed.

"That won't do," said the husband. "You shall try and spin some cloth to sell."

But the coarse thread cut the princess's hands, and the husband began to lose patience with his useless wife.

"Is there nothing you can do?" he cried. "You are useless for everything. Well, I will go and get some pots, and you shall sit and sell them in the market, while I sing."

The poor princess pleaded hard to be left alone in the hut, for she feared she would be recognised by the people, but her husband refused, and when he had brought back some earthenware pots and pans, he sent her forth into the market place.

At first, the people bought freely from the pretty princess, and her husband bought fresh stocks of pots as the first ones were sold. Then one day she took her place at a corner of the market as usual; all at once, a drunken soldier, on horseback, came round the corner, and rode

right into the midst of her stall, knocking over all the stock of pots. She sat crying, afraid to return to the miserable hut which was her only home. But as evening drew nigh, there was no other refuge, so back she went to her husband with the bad news.

He scolded her as she had feared, but at last he said, "Well, leave off crying, you are useless for everything. I have been to the King's palace, and they say they want a kitchen maid. Let's see if you can do that much work, while I go on the road again and sing for my living."

Now the princess became a kitchen maid in the very palace of the king whom she had nicknamed Thrush-beard, and to whom she would have been queen.

She washed the dishes for the palace cook, and fed on such scraps of the delicacies as were left.

Some days after this, a great feast was given at the palace. The princess crept to the door and looked on at the beautiful scene, bitterly repenting of her own former pride.

Presently the King himself entered, and as he looked round, he caught sight of the princess as beautiful as ever, despite her poor dress and wistful face. He crossed the room and drew her towards him into the dance. When she saw that it was King Thrush-beard himself, she tore herself from his grasp; the bits of food, which she had put into her pocket, fell to the ground, and amidst the laughter of the guests, she rushed out of the room and made to go back to the hut.

But the King had stepped through the great windows on to the terrace, and as she ran down the steps, he stopped her.

“Do not be afraid,” he said kindly. “For I and your singer husband, are one and the same. I was the soldier who broke your pots. It was meant to punish your pride, but now do not weep any more, we will start life afresh.”

The princess wept still more bitterly, and said, “Indeed, I am worthless, and not fit to be your bride.”

But the King led her back into the palace, where there awaited her bridesmaids and waiting-women. Then once more clad in beauty, she re-entered the ball room, where waited her father and her husband, and the ball commenced once more, and the princess, now no longer proud and haughty, lived happy ever afterwards with her King Thrush-beard.

THE NEEDLE, THE SPINDLE AND THE SHUTTLE

ONCE upon a time, there lived a young girl whose parents had died when she was a child. She dwelt in a little house with her godmother who had taught her to earn her living with her needle, spindle and shuttle, and to be good and pious.

One day, when she had just turned fifteen, her godmother fell ill. Calling the girl to her bedside, she said, “My child, I am nearing the end. This cottage I will leave you to shelter you from the weather, and my needle, spindle and shuttle, with which to earn your bread.”

She placed her hand on the young girl's head, and blessed her. "Be pure and true-hearted," she added, "and happiness will be yours." So saying, she closed her eyes, and the girl, with many tears, followed her godmother's coffin to the graveyard.

Thenceforth she had to live quite alone, working sadly at her spinning, weaving and sewing, but her kind old godmother's blessing protected her from evil. Her store of flax never seemed to be used up, and no sooner had she completed a length of linen, or made a garment, than someone would come and purchase it, so that she was not in want, and even able to give a little to those in need.

Soon after this, the King's son rode by on his travels through the country in search of a wife. He did not care for a rich one and yet could scarcely take a poor one. Therefore he vowed to marry the maiden who was both the richest and the poorest.

When he arrived at the place where the orphan girl lived, he requested, as he usually did, to be taken to see the wealthiest and the poorest girls in the village. The wealthiest girl was easily found, but the poorest, he was told, must be the orphan who dwelt alone in the cottage at the end of the village.

As the Prince rode by, the wealthiest girl sat at her door dressed in a beautiful gown, and she rose to meet him, making a deep curtsy. But the Prince rode on without speaking.

Soon he arrived at the door of the poor orphan's cottage; she was not outside, but sat in her room which the sunshine lighted up. He stayed to

peep through the window and beheld her sitting by her spinning-wheel, hard at work. However, she had contrived to see the Prince watching her, and though she sat with downcast eyes and blushing face, her thread was perhaps not as even as usual.

As soon as the Prince had gone by, she quickly went to open the window, telling herself that it was too hot in the room; and she gazed after him until she could no longer see even the feather on his hat. Then she went back again to her wheel and her spinning, but one of the old rhymes her godmother used to sing at the wheel came into her head, and she sang:

“Speedily run, Oh! Spindle dear,
Be sure and bring my true love here!”

Then a strange thing happened; the spindle jumped right out of her hands and ran away through the door. She watched it in amazement as it sprang and twirled along over the fields, leaving a trail of golden thread behind it. Presently it had run quite out of sight, so she took her shuttle and commenced to weave.

But the spindle had continued to run on until, by the time it had unwound the last strand of thread, it had reached the Prince. “Why! What is this?” he exclaimed. “The spindle surely means to lead me somewhere.” So he turned his horse and rode back, led by the spindle’s shining thread. Meanwhile the young girl worked industriously until the old godmother’s second rhyme came into her mind, and she began to sing:

“Run and meet him, shuttle dear,
Be sure and bring my true love here.”

As she reached the last word, the shuttle leapt from her fingers and sprang through the door. But it stopped at the threshold and began weaving a most beautiful carpet on which flowers, fruit and leaves were wonderfully interwoven on a gold background.

Stags and squirrels, hares and rabbits, seemed to leap amongst the foliage in a most realistic way, and bright-winged birds perched amidst the branches, only lacking song to be perfect.

Then, having no shuttle or spindle, the young girl took her needle and sang :

“My true love's coming, needle dear,
Be sure to make things ready here.”

At that, the needle sprang out of her hand and commenced to run round and round the room, flashing in the sun. It was just as if fairies were at work unseen ; the tables and chairs became covered with silken tapestry, and velvet curtains hung against the walls. The needle had only just finished this work when the young girl observed the white feather of the Prince's hat pass the window, led by the gold thread. He strode over the wonderful carpet and into the room, where he found the girl still seated at her wheel in her shabby clothes, but glowing amidst all this wonder like a blush rose in a garden.

“You are the richest, although the poorest !” he exclaimed joyfully, “and shall be my Princess.”

In silence the young girl gave him her hand,

and the Prince kissed her, lifted her on to his horse, and rode away with her to the Palace. There they were married amidst the rejoicings of the royal court, and the needle, spindle and shuttle, which had helped to bring about the joyful union, were treasured ever after by the Prince and his Princess.

FIR-CHILD

ONCE upon a time, a Woodsman was walking through the forest, when he heard the cry of a little child, and, going in the direction from which it came, he saw a small boy clinging to the bough of a fir-tree.

He could not think how so small a child had climbed there, for he did not know that an eagle had carried him off from its Mother's lap whilst she lay asleep beneath a tree, and had flown to the tree-top with the boy in its beak.

So the Woodsman climbed up and brought the boy down, carrying him to his own home, there to grow up with the Woodsman's little girl, called Holly.

The child he had saved, the Woodsman called Fir-child, in memory of his rescue from the tree-top, and little Holly and the boy became so fond of one another that they were most unhappy if they were apart for a time.

The Woodsman had an old woman-servant who cooked for him, and one day this woman fetched so many pails of water from the spring

near by that Holly asked her, "Why are you fetching so many pails of water?"

"Promise me not to let anybody know, and I will tell you," answered the Cook.

Holly gave her promise, and the Cook replied, "Tomorrow morning, as soon as the Woodsman has gone out, I shall heat the water, throw Fir-child into it, and boil him!"

Early next day the Woodsman went forth into the forest, before the children had left their beds.

Then Holly said to Fir-child, "Promise to be true to me, and I will never forsake you"; to which Fir-child answered, "Always and for ever I will be true to you and never leave you."

"Then," said Holly, "you must know that last evening Cook brought many pails of water from the Spring, and when I asked the reason she told me not to tell anyone. So I promised to say nothing, and she said that today, as soon as Father has gone into the Forest, she will heat the boiler full of water, and throw you into it, so let us dress quickly and make our escape together."

They got up and dressed quickly, slipped quietly out into the forest, and ran as fast as they were able.

As soon as the water boiled, the old Cook came to the children's bedroom to get Fir-child, but immediately perceived that the children had escaped her.

At this she grew frightened, for she thought, "The Woodsman will be angry if he returns to find that both the children have run off. I will try and bring them back!"

So she sent three forest lads after them, telling the boys to catch up with the children and bring them back as soon as possible.

When the children heard the lads pursuing them, Holly said to Fir-child, "Be true to me, and I will never forsake you," and Fir-child replied, "Always and forever I will stay with you."

"Then you shall be a rose-bush, and I will be the flower-bud upon it," said Holly.

When the forest boys overtook them, no children were to be seen, only a rose-bush with but one flower-bud upon it; so at last they returned and told the Cook that they had not been able to find the children; where they thought they had seen them, there was only a rose-bush with one flower-bud growing on it.

Hearing this story, the old woman flew into a rage, and cried, "You silly geese! Why did you not cut the rose-bush down and pick the flower-bud, and bring them back to me? Now hasten and do this!" So again the forest lads set out into the woods and searched for the rose-bush, and again the children saw them in the distance, and Holly asked Fir-child the question she had asked before, and received the same answer. Thereupon she said, "Then you shall be a Chapel, and I will be the golden crown inside it."

So, when the forest boys reached the spot where they had seen the rose-bush, they now found a small Chapel with a golden crown inside it.

"We can do nothing with this," they said to each other, "We had best go back." But when

they arrived at the Woodsman's cottage, the old Cook asked what they had done, and, hearing their story, she was angrier than before, telling them that they should have pulled down the Chapel and brought the crown back with them. So, having scolded them roundly, she went forth herself with the three forest lads to overtake the children, who saw her coming from afar off.

Now, having asked her question and been answered as before, Holly said that she would turn herself into a lake, and Fir-child should be a Swan upon it, and this also happened as she had said.

When the old Cook came to the edge of the lake, she knelt down beside it and commenced to drink, intending to drain it up and reach the Swan, but he flew out of the water, and, seizing the old woman by the hair with his beak, pulled her into the middle of the lake and would not let her go until she sank and was drowned.

Then the children joyfully resumed their shapes and ran home to the Woodsman's cottage, where they lived merrily together for many a long day.

THE SPIRIT IN THE BOTTLE

ONCE upon a time there lived a woodcutter who worked early and late, until, by his industry, he contrived to lay by some money. Whereon he called his only son to him and said, "My boy, this money that I have worked so hard to save, is

for your education. I want you to learn a trade by which you may be able to keep me when I am too old to work." So the boy was sent to a big school where he worked so hard that he soon became noted for his industry.

When he had studied for a long time yet had not learned all that there was to know, his father found that his savings were exhausted, so that the boy was obliged to go home again.

"Alas I have no more to give you," said his father sadly, "for times are so hard that it is difficult to earn enough for my own needs."

"Do not fear for me, father," said the boy. "Everything happens for the best, and God will help us." So when his father was ready to go to work in the woods the son said, "I will come with you and help to chop the wood."

"But, my boy," said his father, "that work will be too hard for you who have never been accustomed to it; and also, I have no money to buy another axe for you to use."

"Then," said his son, "borrow one from your neighbour until I have saved the money to buy one."

The father asked a neighbour to lend him an axe and at dawn next day they set out for the woods. Not only was his son a great help to his father but he worked cheerfully as well until at midday the father suggested that they would work the better for a rest and some dinner. But the son took his share of the food and said, "You rest, father, while I ramble about in the woods."

"Foolish boy," answered his father, "you will be too tired to work. You had better rest here with me for a while."

His son however would not rest, but went off into the forest eating his bread and looking for birds' nests in the bushes. Soon he came to a huge oak tree which was hundreds of years old and would have taken five men to span. He stood and gazed at the tree thinking how many birds' nests there must be in its great branches, when, suddenly, he thought he heard a voice from within the tree crying, "Do let me out, do let me out." The youth looked about him but could see no one, but again he heard the voice which seemed to come from the earth. "Where are you?" he asked in amazement and the voice answered, "Here I am in the roots of the oak tree. Do let me out." So the youth looked amongst the roots which spread around the base of the oak, and there he found, held between two thick old roots, a dusty bottle. He pulled it out and as the light shone upon it he could see something which looked like a little animal leaping up and down inside it. "Let me out, oh! do let me out," it begged and the youth, not dreaming of harm, opened the bottle. Out sprang a spirit which grew and grew until in a few minutes it became almost as big as the oak tree.

"Know you," cried the spirit in a loud voice, "know you, mortal, what is your reward for releasing me from the bottle?" "No," answered the youth fearlessly, "what is it?"

"I must kill you," thundered the spirit. "If you had told me that," replied the youth, "I would not have let you out, but as to killing me there may be other people's opinions on that matter."

"I care for no other people's opinions," answered the spirit. "Do you think I was



"Know you, mortal, what is your reward for releasing me from the bottle?"

imprisoned in that bottle for pleasure? No, indeed, I was shut in there as a penance and whoever releases me I must kill."

"That is much easier said than tried," said the youth fearlessly, "I do not believe that you are a spirit or that you ever were in that

small bottle. You could not get in there again if you tried."

"That is easily done," said the spirit proudly and folding himself into a very small space he crept slowly back into the bottle again. As soon as he was entirely in it the youth quickly put the stopper back and thrust the bottle between the roots of the tree again. Then he would have returned to his father, but the spirit began to wail and groan, "Let me out. Let me out."

"That is not likely," quoth the youth scornfully, "you threatened to kill me for letting you out once; I shall not let you out again in a hurry."

But the spirit begged and pleaded with him saying, "If you let me out I will give you riches enough to last your lifetime." "No," said the youth firmly, "you will not keep your word." "You are refusing your own good fortune," said the spirit. "I will keep my word and give you wealth."

"I will take the risk," said the youth to himself, "it may be worth while." So he pulled the bottle once more from between the roots and opened it again.

Out rose the spirit in a great cloud and soon became as large as before, but the spirit did not threaten him this time. "You shall be well repaid," he said, giving the youth a small piece of cloth. "If you hold one side of this cloth to a cut it will be instantly healed and if you hold the other side to iron or steel it will become silver."

"I will try it," said the youth, and swinging his axe he chopped through the bark of the oak tree, then held the cloth to it and instantly it healed again as though it had never been cut. "That is well," said the youth, "now we can part peaceably." So the spirit thanked the youth for setting him free and the youth thanked the spirit for his gift and returned to his father, who was angry at his absence. "I thought you would soon get tired of this kind of work," he said crossly. "Never mind, father, I will soon make up for it," answered the youth.

"Indeed you will!" said his father wrathfully, "with no axe?"

"Look, father, I will fell that tree with a blow," and the son rubbed the axe with his cloth and then made pretence of chopping down the tree, which turned up the edge of the axe now that it had been turned into silver. "Why, father, this axe is no good at all," said his son. "Look at the edge." Then the father cried, "Now you have spoiled my neighbour's axe. How can I pay for it?"

"I will pay for it, father," said the youth, but his father cried, "Foolish boy, you have no money to pay for it. Your head is full of silly schoolboy tricks. What do you know of wood-cutting?"

Presently the youth said, "I cannot work with this axe, let us go home." "What?" exclaimed his father, "do you think I can idle my time as you do? You can go home alone!"

The youth answered that he did not know his

way, as he had never been in this wood before, and finally he prevailed on his father to go back with him. When they were home again, the father told his son to go into the town, to sell the damaged axe and give the money to the neighbour, promising to pay the rest as soon as he could earn it. So the youth took the axe to a silversmith who, after testing and weighing it, said, "This is worth 400 dollars, which is more than I have here." "Let me have what you can," the youth replied, "and you shall owe me the rest." So the silversmith paid him three hundred dollars and left one hundred to be paid later and the youth returned home and said, "Father, ask our neighbour what he will take for his axe. I have got some money."

"He has told me already," replied his father. "He wants one dollar and six groschen for it."

"Then give him two dollars for it, father. See I have plenty of money," and he gave his father a hundred dollars saying, "You need never work any more now but shall live in comfort." "Great Heaven!" exclaimed the woodcutter, "where did you get all this money?"

The youth related his story of the spirit in the bottle and how lucky he had been in trusting him a second time. With the rest of his money the youth returned to college and studied surgery, and as the magic cloth could heal all wounds, he became the greatest surgeon in the kingdom.



THE CAT AND THE MILLER'S BOY
One cat turned down his bed, another helped him to undress, while a third snuffed the candles. [see page 96]

THE CAT AND THE MILLER'S BOY

ONCE upon a time an old Miller dwelt in his Mill with his three apprentices, for he had neither wife nor children of his own. One day, after they had worked for him for some years, he called his apprentices, who were brothers, saying :

“ Now that I am growing old, I shall soon be retiring from business. You can all go forth into the world, and whoever brings me back the finest horse, shall stay with me till my death, and to him will I leave the Mill.”

The two elder apprentices were strong, rough lads, but Hans, the youngest, was a slender boy whom the others despised as a weakling, and they did not intend to let him share in the Mill or even in their adventures if they could prevent it.

However, they all set out together, and when they had left the village, the eldest brother said to Hans :

“ You had far better stay here. I am quite sure that you will never get a horse.” But Hans wanted to travel on with them, and at nightfall they all lay down to sleep in a sheltered field.

Early in the morning, before Hans was awake, the two elder brothers quietly arose, and leaving him asleep, went off as fast as they could, thinking that they had tricked him very cleverly. Presently the sun arose and wakened Hans, who looked round him in amazement at finding himself in the field.

"Good Heaven!" thought he, "Where am I?" and, scrambling to his feet, he remembered how he came to be there.

"What can I do to get a horse, left all by myself like this?" he wondered, as he walked on into the forest.

Suddenly he saw a little tawny cat coming towards him, who said in the most amiable way, "Well, Hans, how are you going to find a horse?"

"What!" cried Hans. "Do you know, then, what it is that I want?"

"Yes," answered the tawny cat, "I know quite well what you want, and if you will serve me well for seven long years, I will reward you with the finest horse you have ever seen."

"Why," thought Hans, "Should I at least not see if there is any truth in this wonderful cat's speech?" So he consented to return with the cat to its home, which proved, on their arrival, to be a large castle in the woods.

Here, the cat was attended by a number of servants, all of its own kind. When they dined, three cats played most musically on the violin, 'cello and bass to entertain them during their meal, after which the tawny cat said, "Well, Hans, will you dance with me?"

"Oh, no!" he answered, "I should not know how to dance with a cat!"

"Very well, you may go to bed," said the cat, turning to his servants, who lit candles, and accompanied him to his room.

Here one cat turned down his bed, another helped him to undress, while a third snuffed the candles.

Next morning, the serving cats again entered

and assisted him to dress. "Well done!" said Hans to the cat who had skilfully washed his face, and now his work began.

All day he chopped wood for the tawny cat, with a silver axe and saw, and made himself extremely useful. He met no one about the place except the cat and her attendants who served his meals.

Next day the tawny cat told him to mow the meadows and spread the grass to dry, and for this purpose she gave him a golden sickle and hay-rake, telling him to return them safely.

This also he performed faithfully, and in the evening when he returned the garden tools, he asked the tawny cat for some recompense for his work; but the cat answered, "No! there is other work for you to do first. I will give you planks and bricks, tools and all other materials of silver with which you must build me a little silver house."

This, too, Hans carried out successfully, and when he had finished it, he again asked the cat for the horse she had promised him.

The cat answered that she would show him her horses if he wished to see them, so Hans went with her to the stables. When he had admired them all, the tawny cat invited him to dine once more with her and then told him to return to the mill. "For," she said, "I will bring you your horse myself in three days' time."

Hans had perforce to be satisfied with this promise, and the cat sent two of her attendants to show him the way back to the Mill.

He returned, still clad in the same clothes which he had worn when he set out seven years

ago, and which were now very old and ragged.

The other two apprentices had arrived before him, each bringing a horse, though one of the animals had a lame leg and the other was blind in one eye.

"Well, Hans," they jeered, "Have you brought your horse?"

"My horse will follow me in three days' time," said Hans; but they laughed aloud at this, and did not believe him.

The Miller was angry because he had returned with a ragged suit and no horse, and refused to have him at the table, telling him to eat in the kitchen and sleep in the hen-house.

On the morning of the third day from that on which he had left the tawny cat, there appeared outside the Mill-yard, a carriage drawn by six fine horses, and followed by a still finer horse on which rode a servant in livery.

From the carriage stepped a beautiful maiden, dressed like a Princess, who went into the Mill and asked for Hans.

"He is too dirty and ragged to live in the Mill," answered the Miller. "He is in the yard outside."

Then the Princess bade her servant fetch clothes from the carriage and take them to Hans, who, washed and dressed in garments as fine as those the Princess wore, stepped into the Mill, looking so handsome that the Miller and his other apprentices did not know him and gazed in wonder; but Hans went up to the Princess and knew her to be the tawny cat whom he had served for seven years.

Then the Princess told him that she had been

changed into a cat by a wicked magician, and that Hans had set her free by his faithful service. She asked to see the horses, brought back by the two elder apprentices, and when she had examined them, she told the servant to bring the horse he had ridden.

When the Miller saw the lovely creature, sleek and shining, pawing the ground, he was overcome with admiration and declared that he had never seen a finer horse.

"This is Hans' horse," said the Princess.

"Then this is Hans' Mill too," cried the Miller, while the elder apprentices looked on sullenly, but the Princess replied that he could keep the horse and the Mill too, for Hans would never again need either.

Whereupon she invited Hans to enter the carriage with her, and they drove off, leaving the fine horse in the Mill-yard, and the Miller and his apprentices staring at it.

First the Princess drove to the little silver house which Hans had built for her; but, as they entered the door, it changed into a fine castle with golden hangings and furniture of silver.

Here Hans and the Princess were married and lived happily to a good old age.

THE FEATHER-BIRD

ONCE upon a time there lived a wizard, who used to disguise himself as a beggar, and go from house to house in search of little girls. When he

found one, he would entice her away, and no one could ever discover where they went, and never did they come back again.

One day he came to the house wherein lived three pretty daughters. He appeared to be a poor old cripple, with a sack on his shoulder, in which he could put any food given to him. As he was begging for something to eat, the eldest daughter came out, and pitying him, brought him a piece of bread. Quickly he took it, and touching her with it, he pushed her into the sack and hurried away, before she could utter a single cry, through a dark forest which stood near by, and thence to his castle. Here he set her free, and told her to make herself happy, and gave her everything that she asked for.

After two days, he said to her, "Now I must go away again; here are the keys of every room in the castle. You can do what you like, but there is one room into which you must not enter. It is opened by the smallest key on the bunch, but if you enter the room you will die."

The maiden promised to do as she was told. Then just as he was about to depart, the wizard gave her an egg. "Take great care of it, and do not let it out of your sight, for if it is lost, it will cost you your own life."

Then the wizard went away, and the maiden amused herself by looking into all the rooms of the castle, from cellar to attic. At last she came to the door of the forbidden room, and her curiosity got the better of her. She unlocked the door and entered; it was empty of treasures, but in the centre there stood a large bowl, in which was a bright red liquid like blood.

Frightened and repenting of her deed, the maiden turned to fly, but in her terror, the egg dropped from her shaking fingers right into the bowl! The maiden put her hand into the bowl and took the egg back, and locked up the room as quickly as she could. But no matter what she did, she could not make the egg white again, though she scrubbed and washed it again and again.

The next day the wizard returned home, and asked for the key and the egg. The maiden gave them to him, trembling with fear; and the wizard saw at once that his commands had been disobeyed.

“You have dared to enter that room against my will; now you shall enter it against yours. Your life is forfeited.” Then he dragged hold of her and threw her into the forbidden room.

The next day he returned to the house again disguised as a beggar, and the second sister came forth and gave him a piece of bread. He touched her with it and threw her into his sack, as he had done with the first daughter, and bore her off to his castle.

Giving her the same instructions, he went off again, and the second maiden acted just the same as her sister. Opening the forbidden door, she entered, and in the joy at seeing her sister again, the egg fell into the blood-red bowl, and though both tried to cleanse it, the egg remained red. The two would have made their escape, but the wizard was heard returning, so the second sister had perforce to lock the door again and go down to meet him. When he saw the stained egg, he threw her back into the room.

The next day, he went for the third daughter,

and brought her back with him. To her he gave the same commands, and left her alone. But the maiden was more prudent. First of all she put the egg in a safe place, and she too amused herself by looking into every room ; then when she came to the one forbidden, she too opened it. To her joy, she found that her sisters were alive, though starving for food, which she gave them. When they were restored, she led them forth and hid them, bidding them have patience, and she would find a way to send them back safely.

Soon the wizard returned, and demanded the key and the egg. When he found it clean and white, he said to the maiden : " You have stood the test, and I will make you my bride. Whatever you wish for, I will grant."

" I will be your bride," said the maiden, " but first of all you must take a sack of gold to my father, so that he will give his consent. Take it yourself, while I prepare a feast for the wedding."

The wizard, glad to find a willing bride, and one that had no curiosity, was only too pleased to accede to this demand, and while he had a meal, the third sister returned to her room wherein she had hidden her sisters.

" Come," she said. " Get into the sack, and as soon as you get into the house, tell our father to bring help, but send the wizard back here, for if we do not kill him, we shall never be safe." Then she placed them in the sack, and covered them with gold, so that they were quite hidden.

Then she called the wizard, and said, " Here is the sack ; mind you carry it back quickly, and without stopping by the way. I shall watch you from my window."

The wizard took the sack and went away with it. It was very heavy, and when he had got very tired, he put it down on the ground ; but a voice cried, " I am watching you. Make haste."

The wizard thought it was his bride calling, and did not know that the second sister was speaking, as she had been bidden by her clever sister ; and each time that he stopped to rest, the same voice urged him on, till at last he bore the sack into the house of the girl's father.

Meanwhile at the Castle, the bride prepared a feast and sent servants to bring back the wizard's friends and fellow sorcerers. Then she took a large turnip, and cut out places for eyes and teeth ; putting a lace wrap round it, she fixed it at the topmost window, and arranged it as if it were looking down into the courtyard.

Then she smeared her dress with a bowl of honey, and having ripped open a feather bed, she rolled herself in the feathers, till she looked like a big bird.

The servant at the gate fled, and she let herself out and passed through. Soon she met some of the wedding guests, and they asked her whence she came, for no one was ever known to leave the wizard's castle before.

" I come from the house of the Feather King," said the maiden. " I took the young bride a present, and she is at the window watching for you."

On went the guests, and away sped the clever maiden.

Soon the bridegroom wizard himself met her, and she gave him the same answer.

When the wizard went into the courtyard, he

looked up and saw, as he thought, his bride waiting for him. He entered the castle with his guests, but before he could discover the trick that had been played on him, the friends and brothers of the three sisters came up to the castle doors. They did not try to enter, but closed them so that no one could escape, and piled up wood and twigs, which they set alight. Then the wizard and his companions were burnt to ashes, and everybody was safe once more.

THE CAT AND THE MOUSE AS PARTNERS

ONCE upon a time a Cat met a Mouse and fell in love with her. At last he persuaded the Mouse to live with him, and they kept house together.

One day the Cat returned home, and said, "We shall not starve this winter, for I have found a big tin of fat. Let us hide it away till we really want it, and then we need not fear what happens." But they did not know where best to put it, till at last the Cat said, "We will put it in the church, for no one will dare to steal it then, just beneath the organ, where no one can possibly find it."

So the tin of fat was hidden away, and for a while, it seemed forgotten. But the Cat began to think of it, so at last he said to the Mouse : "I am going out to-day ; I have to stand god-father to a little nephew who is to be christened. You stay at home and be careful."

The Mouse agreed readily. "But," she said, "if there is anything nice to eat, think of me, for I would dearly like some crumbs from the christening cake."

So off went the Cat, but there was no christening party; he just went straight to the hiding-place of the tin of fat, and made a good meal from it.

Having spent the rest of the day in the sun, he returned home to his partner.

"Well, said the Mouse, "Did you have a good time? What did you name your nephew?"

"Oh, 'Top-off,'" said the Cat very quickly, as he thought of the tin of fat.

"'Top-off!' What a very queer name," said the Mouse, but she did not say anything more.

After a little time, the Cat again began to think of the tin of tasty fat, so he said to the Mouse: "Take care of yourself to-day, my dear, for I have to go away again. I am asked to stand godfather to a little niece, and I do not like to refuse."

The kindly little mouse saw him depart as usual, and the Cat went straight away to the church, and beneath the organ, feasted upon the hidden fat.

When he had eaten his fill, he amused himself for the rest of the day, and then returned to his home.

The Mouse welcomed him and asked how the christening party had gone on, and what was the name of the baby.

"'Half-Gone!'" answered the Cat, without thinking, for already he was regretting that he had not eaten more.

“ ‘Half-Gone!’ ” said the Mouse. “ Well, I never heard such a strange name! ”

But before many days had passed, the Cat grew restless. Suppose someone else found the precious tin? He must pay another visit; so the next morning, he said to the Mouse: “ Never twice but thrice, my dear. I have had another invitation to be godfather, and I will get back again as soon as I can.”

Once more the Cat set forth, and the Mouse took the time to set the little house in order.

This time the Cat finished all that was left of the fat. “ After all,” he said to himself, “ I found it, and it is better to eat it now than to let it spoil.”

At the end of the day he returned home, and the Mouse asked again how the christening party had fared, and what was the name given to his godchild.

“ ‘All-Gone,’ ” said the Cat regretfully, as he thought of the empty tin.

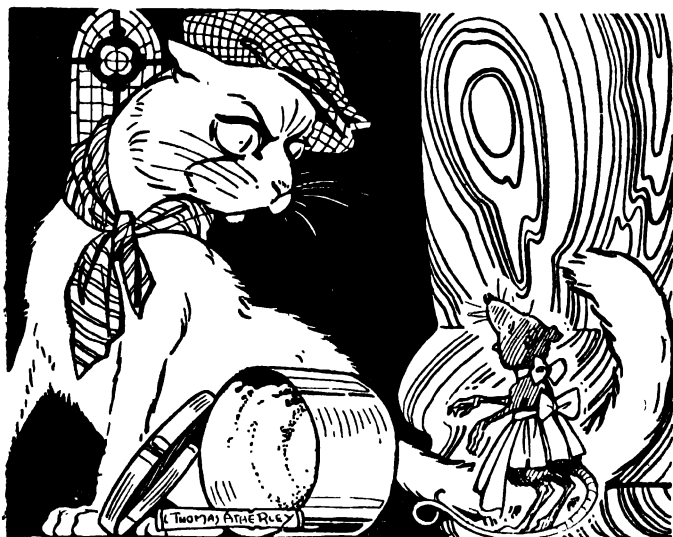
“ ‘All-Gone!’ ” said the Mouse. “ Well, I have never heard such a name,” and thinking that perhaps her partner was vexed at her questioning him, and giving her false names, she curled herself up and went to sleep.

Now there were no more christening feasts for the Cat, and food became more and more scarce, so as the winter was fast approaching, she thought of the tin of fat hidden snugly away. So she said, one morning: “ I think it is time to bring home that tin of fat. We do not want it to spoil.”

“ It won't do that,” said the Cat to himself, with a grin. “ But,” he thought, “ I wish I had hidden the empty tin now.”

Not knowing how to prevent the Mouse from discovering it, he went with her to the church, and they went up to the tin, now empty.

Then the mouse guessed what had taken place. She turned reproachfully to her partner.



"But one word more," said the Cat, . . . "and I will eat you as well."

"Ah, now I know what your queer names meant," she cried. You ate the fat yourself. First, 'Top-Off,' then 'Half-Gone,' and now—"

"But one word more," said the Cat, angry at being found out, "and I will eat you as well."

But the poor little Mouse could not keep her words in.

"'All-Gone!'" she cried, and as she spoke, the Cat made a spring and killed her, thus ending the friendly partnership between them.

THE PICOTEE

ONCE upon a time there was a Queen who had no children, though she had always longed for a little son or daughter.

One day she dreamed that an Angel appeared to her, and said, "Be happy, for you shall be given a son so fortunate that whatever he wishes for will be granted." The Queen went quickly to tell the King of her wondrous vision, and in due time she had a child, which made them exceedingly joyful.

Every day the Queen took her son into the Palace gardens, and bathed him in the waters of a spring which flowed forth there.

One morning she went to sleep with the baby in her arms, and the King's cook, who was aware of the child's wonderful gift, quietly took him away, and killed a hen, whose blood he dabbled over the Queen's dress.

Then he carried off the baby Prince to a safe hiding place, and running to the King, cried out that the Queen had let the child be torn to pieces by wild beasts.

When the King beheld the blood upon the Queen's dress he believed the story, and falling into a great rage, he gave orders that a high tower should be built, with no windows for the light to penetrate, and in this he imprisoned the Queen, there to remain without food or water for seven years, and so die. But every day a pair of white

doves fluttered down to her, bringing food and drink throughout the seven years.

Now the Cook bethought himself, "If it is true that this child has the power of wishing, he may cause trouble for me, if I stay here," so he went away from the Palace, and visited the child in his hiding-place. The boy had now grown big enough to talk, so the Cook told him to wish for a grand castle with furniture and gardens all complete. No sooner had the boy repeated the words after the Cook, than everything appeared as he had wished.

Before long, the Cook said to him, "It is lonely for you here; wish for a lovely young girl to be your companion." The child did so, and at once there appeared before him a little girl as beautiful as a picture.

They played together constantly, and became truly fond of each other, while the Cook lived in idleness and luxury.

One day, however, the Cook thought that some day the Royal Child might want to find the King, and so cause trouble for him. Therefore he called the little girl to his side, and said: "This evening, when the boy is asleep, you must thrust this knife into his heart, and bring me his tongue. If you refuse to do this, you shall die instead of him."

Then he went away, but when he returned next morning, the girl had not done his wicked bidding, and in excuse said, "How can I kill my innocent companion who has done no harm to anyone?"

"Unless you do as I bid you," cried the Cook, "you shall die in his place."

After he had gone, the girl sent for a young

calf, had it killed, and cut out its tongue, which she placed upon a dish.

Hearing the Cook return, she hid the boy in the bed, and pulled the coverlet over him.

Presently the wicked Cook came into the room, and cried, "Give me the child's tongue!" The young girl handed him the dish, but the young Prince flung off the coverlet, and exclaimed: "You villain, why did you wish to kill me? Now hear your punishment! I wish that you shall turn into a black dog with a gold chain about your neck, and that you shall eat red-hot coals so that you may breathe forth flames!"

No sooner had he said the words, than the Cook became a small dog with a chain about his neck, and fiery breath coming from his mouth when he ate red-hot coals.

The young Prince stayed a while in the castle, but before long he thought of his mother, and began to wonder if she still lived. So presently he said to the young girl, "I am going away to find my father. If you will come with me, I will protect you."

"Ah!" she answered, "How could I travel so far, and what would become of me in a strange country, where I am not known?"

The youth, however, refused to leave her behind, and when she would not alter her decision, he wished that she would become a beautiful picotee flower, so that he might carry her with him in that shape.

They took the dog by his chain, and so journeyed to the Prince's own country.

When they arrived there, they found the tower where his mother was imprisoned, but it was so

very high that he was obliged to wish for a ladder upon which to mount to the top. Then he climbed up and, peeping in, he cried, "Dear Queen Mother, are you still living?"

The Queen thought his voice must be that of the dove who brought her food, and answered, "I am well content, for I have but just eaten."

Thereupon the young Prince cried, "I am your own child, who was not killed by wild beasts, as you were told, but am still living and will speedily release you."

Then he descended and went to the King's Palace, where he announced himself as a Huntsman who wished to enter the Royal service. The King replied that he could do so if he were able to obtain some venison, for he himself had been unable to procure any in all his lands.

So the young Huntsman undertook to obtain for the King as much venison as he required, and asked for all the other huntsmen to be assembled to go with him.

Then they set forth and, when they had proceeded a little way, the Prince told them to form a large ring, leaving an open space at one end, in the centre of which he stood and commenced to wish.

Immediately more than two hundred head of game rushed into the enclosure, and the huntsmen quickly shot them, so that sixty cartloads of venison were driven back to the Palace for the King to enjoy.

This plentiful supply was received by the King with much pleasure, and he gave orders that a great feast should be prepared, to which his whole court were invited. Before the assembled com-

pany the King insisted that the young Prince, in his disguise as Huntsman, should sit beside him, and, despite the youth's protest that he was but a poor huntsman, his Majesty would have no denial.

As he took his seat, the young Prince thought of his mother, the Queen, and began to wish that one of the company would ask if she still lived or had died in the tower.

As soon as he had finished the wish, the King's Marshal said, "Your Majesty, while we feast joyously here, how is our lady the Queen? Does she still live in the tower, or is she now dead?"

But the King answered, "I will hear no word of her; she permitted my well-loved child to be stolen by wild beasts."

At this speech, the Huntsman rose, saying, "Most gracious Majesty, and my dear Father, the Queen yet lives, and I am your son, for the wild beasts did not tear me to pieces. Instead your wicked Cook stole me from her arms while she slept, and bedabbled her dress with the blood of a fowl in order to deceive you."

Then he seized the chain, by which the dog was fastened, and saying, "Here is the villain," he requested that red-hot coals might be brought, and these he ordered the dog to eat until the fire streamed from its mouth.

Thereupon the Prince wished that the Cook might stand before them in his proper shape, and there in the presence of all the court, the dog became the Cook, in his white apron, and with a knife in his hand.

When the King beheld his old Cook, he fell into a terrible rage and commanded that he should be

imprisoned in the darkest dungeon in the tower. Whereupon the Prince enquired whether his Father would see the young girl who had aided and protected him at peril of her own life, to which the King answered, "Yes, very willingly."

"Then," said the Prince, "Behold her in the shape of this flower," and he unpinned the picotee from his breast whereon he wore it, and placed it before the King.

All the company declared that they had never before seen so lovely a blossom.

"Then you shall see the maiden herself," smiled the Prince, and he wished that she might become a maiden again. Immediately she stood before them as sweet and lovely as the flower she had been a moment before.

Now the King despatched two men-servants in great haste to the tower, begging the Queen's forgiveness and requesting her return to her rightful place at the Royal table. The Queen, however, was too overcome to eat and said gently, "Now the most merciful God who has spared me to see this day will soon set me free."

Some days after this she died, declaring herself happy and at peace, and the two white doves who had fed her in her prison tower, followed her to the grave and hovered there till all else had left it.

The old King sorrowed for her until at last he died of grief, and the Prince married the flower maiden, and they ruled happily as King and Queen for many years.

THE GOOSE-GIRL

ONCE upon a time there was a Queen whose consort had died several years before, leaving her with but one child, a girl of great beauty. As soon as the maiden grew old enough, she was betrothed to a Prince who dwelt in a distant land, and when the day came whereon she had to depart on her wedding journey, the Queen, her mother, gave her many valuable gifts of gold and silver plate, royal garments and ornaments of every sort, for she loved her daughter fondly. Also, she sent her own maid to bear her company and wait upon her, as well as horses for the journey, including the Princess's own horse, Falada, who had the gift of speech.

Before they all departed, the Queen called her daughter into her chamber, and then pricked her own finger so that it bled. Holding a fine handkerchief beneath it, she allowed three drops of blood to fall upon it, and then gave it to her daughter.

"Keep this carefully, my dear child," she said, "and it will protect you from harm."

Then they bade one another a tender farewell, and the daughter put the handkerchief in the bodice of her gown for safety, and departed to meet her bridegroom.

Some time after she had started, the Princess became thirsty and bade her maid dismount and fill a cup with water from the stream nearby, but

the maid answered insolently, "Get the water for yourself if you are athirst, for I will wait on you no longer."

The Princess was so thirsty that she did so, feeling very astonished and humbled, while the three drops of blood upon her handkerchief cried out :

"Ah ! Princess, if thy Mother knew,
Her heart would break for love of you."

But as the Princess bent over the stream to drink, the handkerchief, on which the drops of blood had been spilt, fell out of the bosom of her dress and drifted down the stream unperceived by the Princess herself, though the maid had seen it happen, and with secret joy, for she knew that now the Princess was in her power.

So when her mistress came back to mount her horse, the maid cried, "No ! you shall mount *this* horse, and I will have Falada !" Then she forced the Princess to remove her fine clothes and change with her own rough gown, vowing to take her life unless she promised before Heaven that she would not tell anyone at the King's Palace what had happened. So the poor Princess, being weak and gentle, was forced to do the bidding of the maid, who was strong and cruel.

However, Falada, the horse, saw all that befell, though she had to carry the maid in her mistress' seat, while the poor Princess had to ride the maid's sorry nag, and thus they arrived at the Palace of the Bridegroom Prince.

They were received with great ceremony and rejoicing, but it was the maid whom the Prince

lifted from her horse, believing her to be the true Princess, while her mistress was left standing at the foot of the steps with the horses.

As she stood there, the King chanced to see her from his window, and despite her common clothes, he observed her delicate beauty, and enquired of the supposed bride whom she had left at the foot of the steps.

"That is just a kitchen-maid whom I brought to bear me company," was the reply. "Give her some work to do, she is too clumsy to wait upon me."

So the true Princess was told to help the boy Conrad, who kept the geese outside the Palace walls.

Before long, the false bride besought her betrothed to have the horse Falada killed, as she declared that it was dangerous and had thrown her off upon the journey, and to please her, the Prince agreed. But secretly she was afraid that the horse would tell someone how she had acted towards her mistress, the real Princess, and she was relieved to know that Falada would die.

Soon the Princess heard that her horse was to be killed, and begged the horse-dealer to sell her poor Falada's head for a golden piece, and nail it over the high archway beneath which she drove the geese each day, so that at least she would be able to see her old friend.

The dealer did as she asked him, and next day, as she passed under the archway with Conrad and the geese, she sighed as she looked up at the horse's head:

"Poor Falada! Alas, that such should be your fate!" And Falada answered:

“ Alas, Princess, that thus your way you take ;
If thy Queen-mother knew, her heart would
break.”

They drove the geese through the town to a meadow, and then the Princess seated herself on a log, and let down her golden hair. Conrad looked at the shining mass and tried to pull out a tress, but the Princess sang :

“ Blow breezes, blow away,
Blow Conrad’s hat, and do not stay
Its rolling till my hair is bound
Securely with a ribbon round.”

Then the strong breeze lifted the boy’s cap from his head, and kept him chasing it all over the fields until the Princess had finished coiling her hair tightly about her head. Conrad was too vexed to speak to her all day, so they silently kept the geese and as silently drove them home at the end of the day.

Next morning the same things happened exactly as on the previous day, and again Conrad was so angry at his failure to win a golden lock of hair that he would not utter a word ; but, after they had driven the geese back that evening, Conrad complained to the King that the Goose-girl angered him so much that he would no longer work with her. Then the King commanded him to describe exactly what had vexed him, and so Conrad told him faithfully all that had occurred, from the time that the Princess spoke to the horse’s head, which was fastened up over the archway, and which had actually answered her,

to the moment when he tried to snatch a golden curl, and the wind blew away his hat.

After hearing his story, the King commanded him to go once more with the goose-girl in the morning, and next day he concealed himself behind the pillars of the archway, and listened while the Princess spoke to the horse's head, and heard it answer her. He followed at a little distance until they reached the meadow, where he stood hidden by the trees at the meadowside while the Princess let down her shining hair and sang :

“ Blow, breezes, blow away,
Blow Conrad's hat, and do not stay
Its rolling till my hair is bound
Securely with a ribbon round.”

Then the wind blew and off went Conrad's hat with him after it, until the gold hair was tightly coiled up by the time the boy came back.

Having watched all this with great attention, the King returned to the Palace unobserved. But that evening he sent for the goose-girl and asked for an explanation of what he had seen and heard.

“ Alas ! ” said the true Princess, “ That I may not reveal to any living being, for I have sworn by the Heaven above me not to do so.”

More than this the King could not persuade her to say, so at length he commanded her, “ Since you may tell no living being, whisper in the chimney corner and your heart will feel lighter.”

He went out of the room as if vexed that she would not do as he bade her, and creeping into

the chimney corner, the Princess began to cry and lament her sad fate.

"Alas ! " quoth she, " that I, the true Princess, should sit here thus, a goose-girl, while my false maid has stolen my place, my clothes and my royal bridegroom. Truly, if my mother, the Queen, knew this, she would be heart-broken."

Now the King had stood by the fireplace in the next room while she spoke, and heard quite plainly every word.

So, when she had ceased to lament, he entered and called her to him, telling his servants to take her and to replace her royal clothes, and then return with her to his presence.

When they led her back to him, clad in all her royal garments and ornaments of gold, her beauty proclaimed the truth of all she had said, and the King sent for his son to behold the true bride, after having been deceived by a serving-maid. The Prince was charmed by her loveliness, though overcome with regret at the treatment she had received in the royal Palace, and the King then ordered a magnificent feast to be prepared, to be attended by all the court.

The Prince sat with the true Princess upon his right hand, and the serving-maid on the other, but the latter did not dream that her mistress was thus restored to her rightful position. Seeing her in the royal garments and ornaments in the dazzling lights, she believed them to be worn by a strange Princess who had come to honour the occasion.

After the feast, the King asked the false bride what fate was deserved by one who betrayed his master and deceived the King.

Put round in this way, the false Princess did not recognise her own wickedness, and answered boldly, "He deserves to be sealed up in a barrel studded with nails, and then cast into the river."

"Truly," answered the King, "You have pronounced your own fate and well deserve it."

This punishment was speedily carried out. The Prince wedded his true bride, and reigned with her for many years in all joy and honour.

OLD MOTHER FROST

ONCE upon a time, there lived a widow who had two daughters, the one of whom was as beautiful and good, as the other was ugly and idle. She loved the ugly one better, however, because she was her own child, while Gretel was her step-daughter. She made Gretel do the work as if she were a kitchen maid, while her own daughter idled and danced her time away.

Every day, when the housework was done, Gretel was sent out to spin by the well near the road-side. One day, the spindle pricked her fingers so badly that they became covered with blood, and as Gretel knelt down by the well to wash her hands, the spindle dropped from her fingers into the water. Unable to reach it, the maiden at last returned home and told her step-mother what had happened. The widow was angry, and after scolding Gretel till she was

tired, she said, "I have no money for another spindle, so go back and fetch it out. You will have nothing to eat till you get it back."

Poor Gretel went back to the well, and in her efforts to reach the spindle, she fell right into the water herself.

When she opened her eyes again, she found that she was in a beautiful meadow. Flowers bloomed around her in the sunlight, birds were singing, and Gretel rose gladly to her feet. She walked through the grass till she came to a lane. Here she found a baker's oven, but could not espy anyone near. From the oven came the sound of voices, crying, "Take me out, take me out! I shall be burnt up! I have baked too long already!"

Gretel opened the oven door, and drew out the loaves one by one, leaving them on a wooden stool. Then she went further on, and came to a heavily laden apple tree. From the tree came voices, crying, "Shake us, shake us down! We shall get over-ripe!"

So Gretel shook the branches till all the apples had fallen to the ground, when she picked them up and placed them in a pile beneath the tree.

Then she went on her way again, till she came to a cottage. From one of its windows peeped forth a very old woman, whose teeth were so large that Gretel at first turned to run away. But the old woman cried "Do not be afraid, my child. I will not hurt you."

So Gretel returned, and the old woman said kindly, "If you will stay with me and keep my house tidy, you shall have a good home. Only

you must make my bed well and shake it so that the feathers fly, for then it snows upon Earth. I am 'Mother Frost,' and with the help of Snow, I look after Winter."

So Gretel, encouraged by the kind voice of Mother Frost, promised to stay with her and work hard.

She did indeed find a good home, she shook the beds hard, and the feathers blew down as flakes of snow.

She remained with Mother Frost for some time, but at last she became homesick, and although she knew she was far better off with her kind mistress, yet she felt that she would like to see her own home once more. She told Mother Frost her desires, and the old woman said kindly enough, "Yes, you shall return home, and as you have served me well, if you want to come back again, I will fetch you myself."

She took Gretel by the hand and led her to a big door. This she opened, and as she did so, a shower of gold fell down, covering Gretel with golden coins. "This too you must take with you," said Mother Frost, and she gave the maiden the spindle which had been lost in the well.

Then the door closed, and Gretel found herself quite near the cottage door which had been her home, and as she came up the path, the cock close by, crowed :

"Cock-a-doodle-doo !

Our Golden maid's come home again."

But Gretel went straight in to her stepmother, and when the widow saw the golden coins, she

pretended to be glad the maiden had returned. Gretel told her how she had got the gold, and her stepmother, though jealous, kept Gretel by her. She made up her mind that her own daughter should get wealth the same way. So she sent her out to the well-side, and bade her throw the spindle into the water, and jump in after it.

The girl obeyed, and like her stepsister, awoke to find herself in the beautiful meadow.



She shook the beds hard, and the feathers blew down as flakes of snow.

Like her stepsister, she went down the lane till she came to the baker's oven. She heard the voices calling, "Take me out, take me out, I am burning!"

But instead of stopping, the girl tossed her

head and said, "I'm not going to soil or burn my hands," and walked on.

Then she came to the apple tree, and the apples called, "Shake me, shake me, I shall get over-ripe!" but the girl only laughed at the idea, and walked on again till she came to Mother Frost's cottage.

But she was not afraid when the old woman, with big teeth, looked out, for she knew from Gretel that this was to be her future mistress.

Mother Frost called to her and took her in, and for the first day, the ugly daughter worked harder than she had ever done for her own mother. But she thought of the shower of golden coins. On the second day, however, she was tired, and did very little, and each morning she got up later, did less, and did not even trouble to shake the beds at all, so that the feathers did not fly.

At last Mother Frost got angry, and told her to leave her service. The girl was not sorry, for now, she thought, she will serve me the same as Gretel.

Her mistress led her to the big door, but when she was beneath it, a shower of pitch, instead of gold, descended upon her.

"That is your wage for your service," said Mother Frost, and she shut the door behind her.

Angry and frightened, the girl found herself outside her home, and fled up the path to her own door. The cock on the house top crowed derisively:

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!

Our dirty maid's come home again!"

The pitch stuck to her, try as she might to remove it.

Gretel, after a little while, went back to Mother Frost's cottage, as she had promised to do.

THE STARRY COINS

ONCE upon a time, there lived a little child whose parents were both dead, and who was so poor, that she had neither room to dwell in, nor even a bed to sleep upon. She possessed nothing except the few clothes she wore, and a crust of bread which some kind person had given her. She was, however, a sweet and pious little girl, and being left thus alone in the world, she went bravely out on to the road, saying to herself, "The good God will protect me."

Before long, she saw a beggar who cried to her, "Have pity on me ; I am starving." She gave him the crust of bread and exclaimed, "May God protect you," as she passed on.

Soon she met a child who was weeping, and cried to her, "My head is cold, please give me your cap to put on." So the little girl took off her warm cap, and put it on the child's head. Then she went on again until she met another child, who wept with the cold because it had no coat, and this little one she also comforted, giving up her coat to keep it warm.

At last, just as dusk fell, another poor child came to her, with scarcely a rag to wear, begging

for her warm frock. "Poor little thing," the gentle child said to herself, "It is almost dark now. No one will see that I have no frock on," and she gave the little one her frock.

Now she had little indeed to call her own, and she shivered in the cold night air, but as she walked, there fell shining stars from Heaven all around her, and as she stooped to pick them up, they turned into glittering coins, and she saw that in place of the poor frock which she had given away, she was wearing the warmest, softest garment she had ever seen. Then she raised a smiling face to Heaven, and thanking God for his goodness, she gathered the coins in her frock, and lived in comfort ever after, for as soon as she gave a coin to a poor creature, two more came shining in its place.

